

JAMES FALLAWS: WHY RUSH GOT BORING / IN DEFENSE OF CABBIES

The Atlantic Monthly

MAY 1994

**THE CODE
OF THE
STREETS**

HOW THE INNER-CITY
ENVIRONMENT FOSTERS
A NEED FOR RESPECT
AND A SELF-IMAGE BASED
ON VIOLENCE

BY ELIJAH ANDERSON

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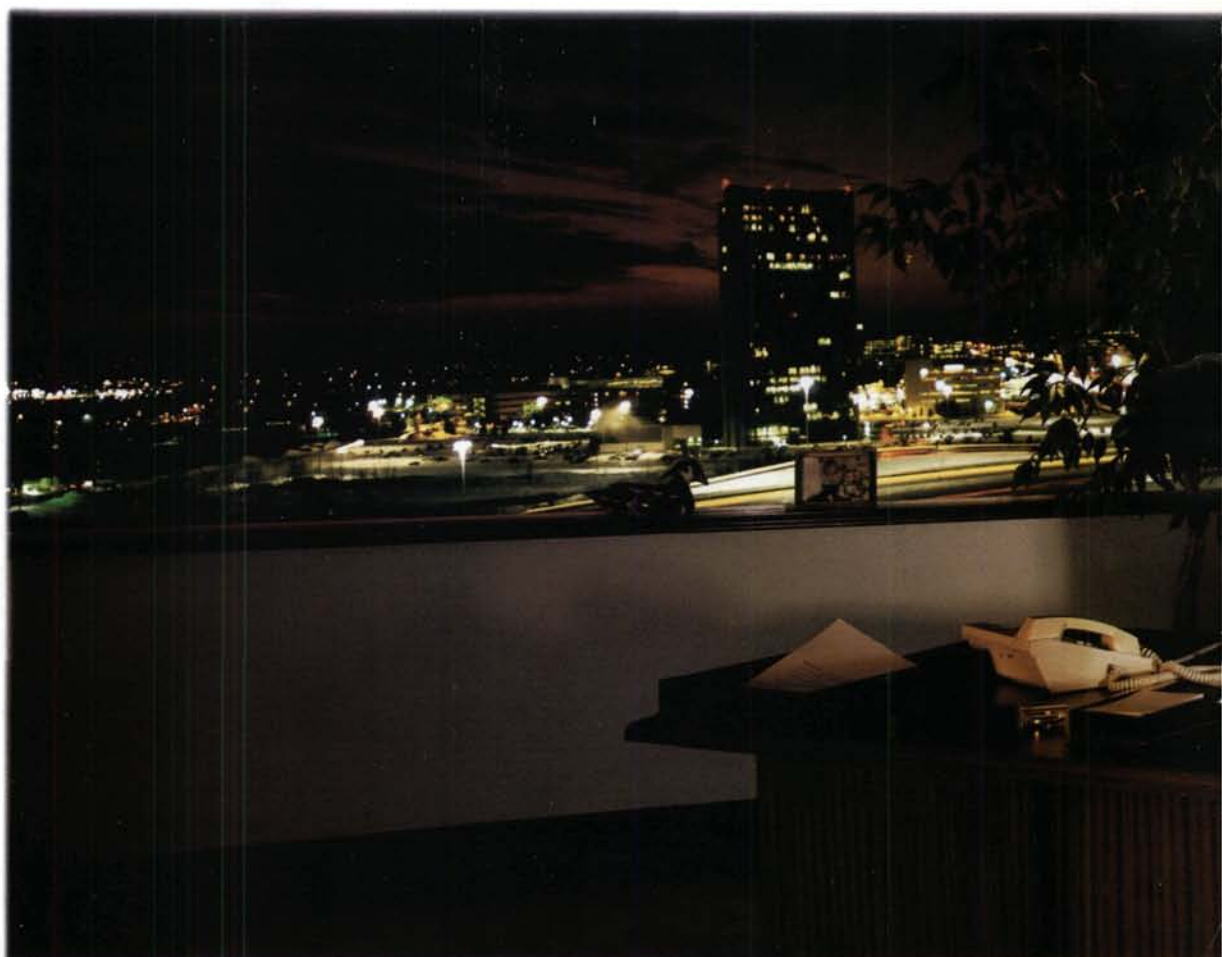


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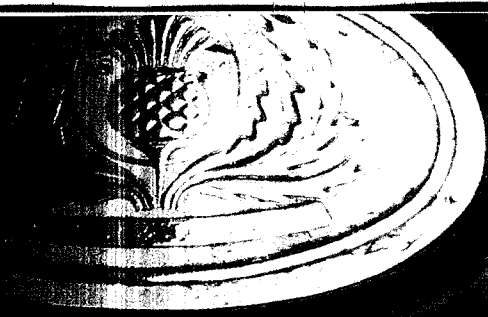
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745 BOYLSTON STREET

IN August of 1988 *The Atlantic Monthly* published an article by James S. Fishkin, a political scientist at the University of Texas, in which he presented a blueprint for a national caucus that would be a powerful corrective to our current system of opinion polling. Fishkin later expanded his article into a book, *Democracy and Deliberation*, and this month British television viewers will get a chance to watch the first large-scale test of the caucus.

Ordinary polls gauge what the public thinks about issues and candidates—no matter how little it may know about them. Fishkin's form of national caucus, which he now calls "deliberative polling," aims to gauge what the electorate would think if voters actually knew something about the issues they were giving opinions on. In the British test 400 citizens selected by random sampling were brought to Manchester last month for a long weekend of discussion and debate on the issue of crime. These representative Britons were paid a stipend for their participation. They read briefing material, met crime experts, questioned politicians, and debated among themselves. Only then were the respondents asked to give their opinions. The results of this survey, along with significant portions of the deliberations, are to be broadcast nationally by Britain's Channel 4 network and published in London's *Independent*.

Ultimately Fishkin would like to see deliberative polling

play a role in U.S. national elections. Fishkin and PBS had organized such a poll for the 1992 presidential campaign, to be held a month before the Iowa caucuses, but it was canceled when funding fell short. During the 1996 campaign Fishkin is likely to get another chance. He now has commitments from all ten presidential libraries to sponsor a National Issues Convention in January of 1996, with approximately 600 randomly selected participants, to be held at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library, in Austin, Texas. *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* will give the event television coverage. The British, too, have announced plans to offer a deliberative poll to coincide with their next national elections, which by law must be called sometime before April of 1997.

Since the 1968 elections Americans have enacted countless reforms and counter-reforms of the electoral process. But such tinkering, as Fishkin observed in these pages, "has been limited by a false dilemma: that we must choose between the competence of elites—well-informed but anti-democratic—and the superficialities of mass democracy." To some observers, town-hall meetings, Bill Clinton's favorite forum, constitute one way out of this dilemma. Deliberative polling, with its emphasis on the provision of accurate information and on sustained face-to-face interactions, may be better yet. —THE EDITORS

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The Coming Anarchy

I have always enjoyed Robert D. Kaplan's articles in *The Atlantic Monthly* for their insightful commentaries on current issues. "The Coming Anarchy" (February *Atlantic*) was typically thought-provoking.

However, I have three criticisms of the article. The first is that unlike Kaplan's other articles—on Eastern Europe, for example—this one is almost completely ahistorical. No attempt is made to place the current conditions in West African nations (or, for that matter, in most developing countries) in the context of a very long and ugly history of exploitation by European and Middle Eastern states. The reader is left with the impression that somehow these societies have become inherently ungovernable owing to weak political institutions and processes and the breakdown of domestic economic and social order. This is hardly the case. The current breakdown of law and order in most of the developing world is merely the result of a long and inglorious relationship with the occupants of Kaplan's "limo," who for centuries enslaved, colonized, and exploited the resources of these countries to their own advantage.

The behavior of the limo's occupants is perfectly in keeping with the rest of human history, going back to the earliest *Homo sapiens* on this planet—that is, they used those resources that were easily available at the least cost to themselves and their group. The earliest human beings moved from tropical climates to less inviting climates only when the pressures of population and scarce resources forced them to. Similarly, the need for natural resources, labor, and markets led the industrializing European societies to conquer and enslave much of the developing world. That process also deepened the divisions (ethnic, religious, caste) in these societies and created a new class of elites and rulers who have little in common

with the mass of people they govern. Today, as Kaplan points out, these societies seem on the verge of self-destruction as a result of overpopulation, disease, and environmental degradation. However, Kaplan appears to think that the "Last Man" (who is in the limo) is going to survive the process while the "First Man" destroys himself. Human history would appear to challenge this perspective. If the process is understood as one based on the need to acquire the resources necessary for survival, the occupants of the limo are doomed. The limo is surrounded by people who are aware of the difference in living standards that separates the Last Man from the First Man, thanks to the communication revolution. They will find a way to get a share of the resources. Kaplan barely touches on this when he points out that states cannot make rules to keep immigrants out forever. The twenty-first century is going to witness human migration on a scale that this planet has yet to see—and the industrialized states will try to stop the flow, with force if necessary.

This takes me to my second criticism—of Kaplan's thesis regarding the demise of the state. This thesis reappears every two or three decades as new challenges to state power appear on the international scene. In the 1960s and 1970s it was the growing power of transnational corporations; today it is the presence of ethnic and sectarian warfare. Despite all the nay-sayers, the state has survived and appears to be doing quite well—after all, many of those separatist groups Kaplan speaks of are attempting to set up their own states and governments, however small and weak. What is interesting is that the author, despite his protestations that the state is "a purely Western notion, one that until the twentieth century applied to countries covering only three percent of earth's land area," still sees the weakening and ultimate demise of the state as the forerunner of planetary anarchy! In most parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the modern state's hold

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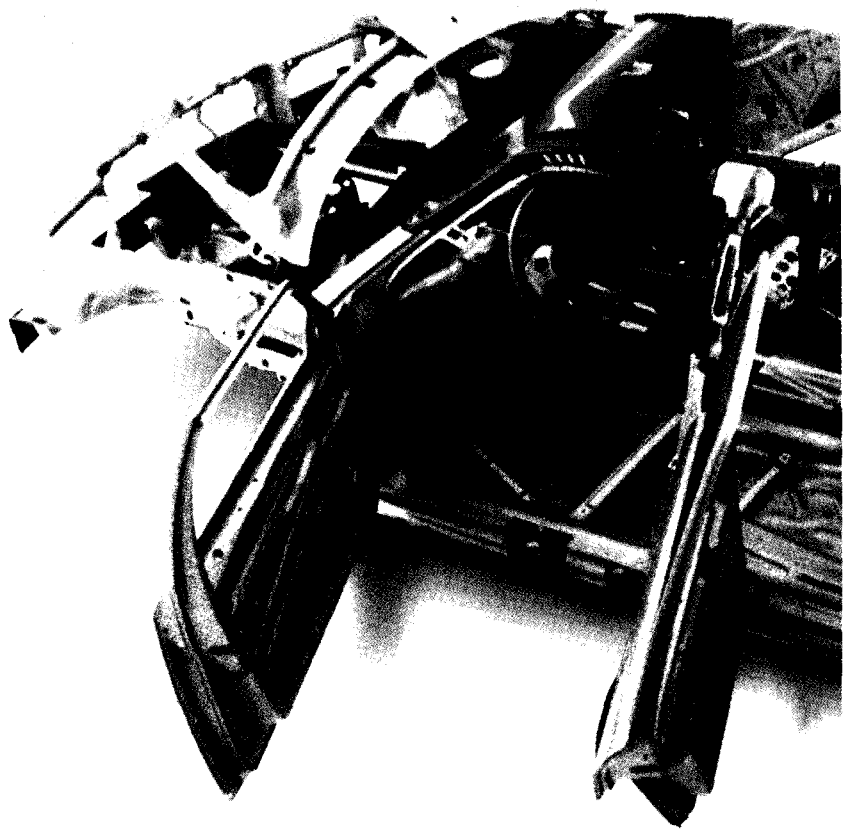
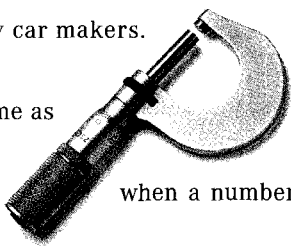
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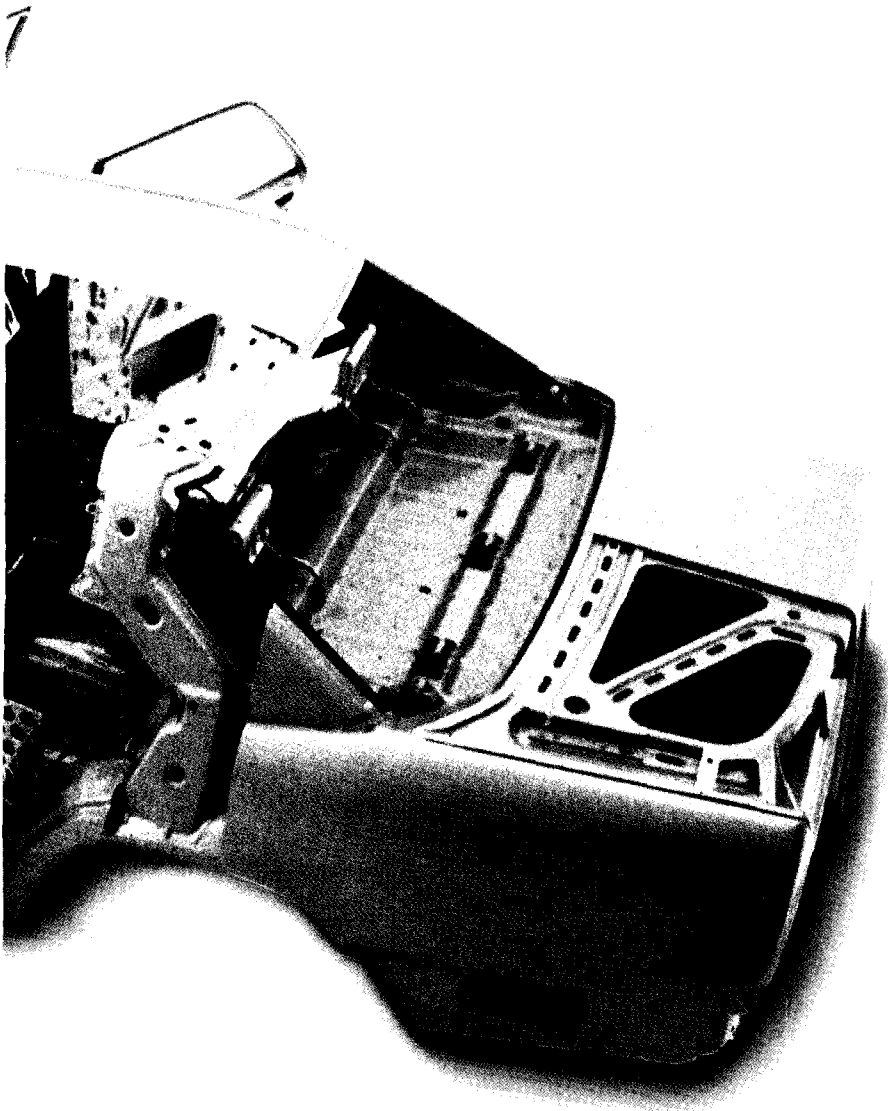
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on society has been extremely tenuous and has been dependent on the use of military force. It is other institutions, such as the family, church, caste, and tribe, that have kept these societies together. Most people in the developing world lead a subsistence existence and are simply not as dependent on the state as are the peoples of the Western industrialized world, whose consumption patterns derive from an extensive and organized intervention by a powerful bureaucratic state. In the final analysis, states do not determine the direction that human history will take. People do. And it is here that the twenty-first century might provide the biggest irony in terms of human survivability. The First Man might indeed be the Last Man in a world where there were fewer resources and weaker governments.

A final point: Kaplan's article, based as it seems to be on the different futures that await the First and Last Men, omits mention of choices that could be made *now* to avert the coming disaster. Perhaps this is because such choices would involve tough questions: the right of the few (in the limo) to consume the largest proportion of the world's resources; the obligation owed by the few to those whose immiserization they have helped cause; and our ability to live together as a community on a planet whose ecosystems have no boundaries.

Sudha Ratan
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, Ga.

"The Coming Anarchy" was magnificent in scope and substance. I have a question: How does the burgeoning disease rate in Africa affect Kaplan's estimate of population growth in that area? Do his population-growth figures include attrition from tuberculosis, AIDS, hybrid strains of malaria, and so forth in Africa and elsewhere?

B. Kim Taylor
New York, N. Y.

Robert D. Kaplan's grimly foreboding article sadly brings to mind the Native American experience in the United States not much more than a century ago. At that time expansionism was deemed "destiny as willed by Providence." The systematic elimination of a total race of people and their culture took place then, too, through

colonization, reformation, and genocide—or "ethnic cleansing," if you will. European-Americans pressed westward with a fervor unparalleled by any other people before or since. Ecological preservation was as much a concern to the expansionist then as it is to the West African today. Thomas Fraser Homer-Dixon's viewpoint as suggested by the article clearly demonstrates the old maxim "Only the strong survive." With no more than a creek and a chain-link fence separating "El Norte" and Mexico, one might easily be led to believe that northern expansion by Mexican nationals could threaten life in the United States as we know it. However, with *maquiladoras* already in place, the North American Free Trade Agreement on the table, and political maps being what we know them to be, "manifest destiny" may once again become a catchphrase in the twenty-first century.

Robert P. Fabian
Chicago, Ill.

Robert Kaplan's disturbing piece challenges a lot of assumptions about nations and nationality after the Cold War. Let me challenge a few more, which were revealed in his piece.

First, birth rates are not "exploding." In fact, they are coming down in nearly all parts of the world. The evidence is that birth rates would fall still faster if women had only the number of children they wanted. If the present mechanisms for delivering safe, affordable, effective family planning to people in developing countries were stronger, the next century's demographic pressures would be more manageable.

Second, the presence of businessmen and laptop computers does not necessarily mean progress, nor does their absence mean chaos and decline. Many "poor" societies, in Africa and elsewhere, are holding together much better than Kaplan suspects. Part of the reason, as he hints in his discussion of Turkey, is that they emphasize individual needs—for example, education, health, control over fertility—as the basis for a workable society.

Third, Kaplan fails to mention the vast differences in wealth which fuel the various conflicts, ethnic and otherwise, around the globe. Is it coincidental that poor countries and poor areas in rich countries are worst afflicted by war and

terror? The mistaken assumption is that "development" doesn't work. The evidence is otherwise: a relatively small injection of investment in human development (for instance, in the areas mentioned above) will lay the groundwork for future prosperity and peace.

But that assumes a real will and a real effort to assist, within countries and between countries. Are we prepared to pay that price? Kaplan's article suggests that we should be. If we do not pay now, we will certainly pay later, in the currency of quality of life if not of life itself: unlivable cities, a devastated environment, and endemic conflict around the globe.

Alex Marshall
United Nations Population Fund
New York, N. Y.

Robert Kaplan accurately depicts the pervasive lawlessness and cruelty that afflict many parts of our globe and that we usually try to ignore. His apocalyptic vision of a world engulfed by anarchy is based on his experiences in today's Sierra Leone, Kurdistan, and Haiti, which are cited as portents of future decay around the globe. However, other journalists, reporting from Singapore, Zimbabwe, or Costa Rica, might make entirely different predictions. Throughout history oases of civilization, large and small, have managed to flourish amid deserts of anarchy; whether civilization today is waxing or waning is debatable. Are ours the best or the worst of times? The answer seems to depend on one's location and angle of vision. One cannot be optimistic for the people of West Africa regardless of whether or not their frontiers change over the next decade, as predicted by Kaplan. Conversely, in several countries of the Pacific Rim and Latin America, including our neighbor Mexico, auguries for development and progress seem favorable. No one knows whether the worst-case scenario Kaplan paints of continuing population explosion and urban decay in the "developing countries" is realistic; nor is it known what future actions the developed countries may take to prevent, or insulate themselves from, the tide of anarchy that threatens to engulf the rest of the world.

Sadly, there is some truth in Kaplan's suggestion that wealthier societies are likely to increase their resources while poorer ones are likely to face further impoverishment, but his picture of a sealed

(Rick Gongorek is a Prudential Securities Broker)

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stretch limousine traversing malodorous slums seems hyperbolic. The roads of the future, like those of today, will no doubt carry many types of vehicles, including oxcarts, bicycles, and jeeps, and humanity is likely to remain a checkerboard of democracy and tyranny, poverty and wealth, for a long, long time to come.

Franz von Lichtenberg
Boston, Mass.

Although Robert Kaplan writes about issues in the Third World that deserve much attention, and makes accurate observations on a variety of economic and political realities, he manages to give a distorted image of West Africa. He seemed to meet only *juju* warriors, hoodlums, and looters. He fails to acknowledge the men and women who are living with dignity, mutual respect, and a strong network of social values in these cardboard shacks held together by plastic wrap.

I spent the month of January in the Cote d'Ivoire, where I saw evidence of depleted resources, a scarcity of material goods, a general restlessness that was acutely aggravated by the overnight devaluation of the CFA franc, and corruption at all levels of government. In countries that lack readily available material goods and provide few daily comforts, other qualities, such as keeping one's word, respect for elders, and family values (something we have trouble even defining in America), take on greater importance. These qualities continue to be driving forces in West Africa. True, they may disappear in the chaos that Kaplan predicts. But they exist now. Kaplan fails to acknowledge this. A country's character is not wiped out overnight—not even in economic and political upheaval and in the face of environmental disaster.

Comparing slum quarters in Abidjan to those in Turkey, Kaplan says, "But in Turkey I learned that shantytowns are not all bad. Slum quarters in Abidjan terrify and repel the outsider. In Turkey it is the opposite."

Not all shantytowns in Abidjan are war zones, as Kaplan suggests. I know because I lived in one. Kaplan simply doesn't provide a complete picture. Adjame, Treicheville, Marcory, Chicago, Washington—all sprawling slums around the country's capital—are no worse or better than slums in the rest of the world.

They have their share of violence, garbage, and degenerates, and of honest, modest merchants and struggling families trying to raise children in the midst of political, economic, and environmental crisis. Implying, as Kaplan does, that these slums are only spawning grounds for degenerates is irresponsible.

Scotia Luhrs
Brookline, Mass.

Both Stephen Kinzer's "A Climate for Demagogues" (February *Atlantic*) and Robert D. Kaplan's "The Coming Anarchy" are strongly supported by the research conducted for *Army 21*, a long-range strategic study for the United States Army. I was the project leader for this effort from July of 1990 to July of 1992. Our study, which was supported by more than \$771,000 in research funds, looked at the world of 2005–2015 in the areas of economics, geopolitics, demography, resources, technology, society, education, and military science. Plausible alternative worlds for the future were also developed and examined.

Stephen Kinzer found what we described as the key to the future. The key is what will be the political perception of economic changes. Many changes in Germany, as in the United States, are the profound changes wrought as the industrial era becomes the post-industrial era. The transition from one era to another coincides with, and perhaps is partly the cause of, the end of the Cold War and the resulting tectonic-plate shifts in geopolitics. The real driving wheels of change through this transitional period are technology and demography.

Kaplan captured the dynamics at work that will produce a world of haves (unhappy as they are in the Germany described by Kinzer) and truly desperate have-nots. There will be incredible immigration pressures on the haves. Each "nation" that currently has a color on the map will have to come to grips with the profound changes of the new era. Meanwhile, ideas continue to motivate humankind. Liberal democracy will be only one of the ideas out there. So a national-security threat may arise, possibly on the scale of the Cold War, if someone can articulate the needs, ambitions, and desires of the Hobbesian billions but advocates violence. This spokesperson could create a new ideological antithesis to America

and the West. Also, an internal-security threat may arise if all the trends of the new era are toward polarization, resulting in multiple dividing lines throughout the nation. A clear countervailing force for *E Pluribus Unum* must be found, or the coming anarchy will tear at the United States even as it ravages so much of the rest of the world.

James A. Bowden
Poquoson, Va.

Robert D. Kaplan replies:

All these letters raise legitimate issues. Space permits me only a brief response to a few points.

The birth rates I cited throughout my article were "net" rates—that is, disease-related deaths were taken into account. For example, the average woman in Guinea will give birth to more than six children. But the net rate of population increase is only 2.5 percent.

True, birth rates in many parts of the world are dropping. The net rate of population increase in Egypt, for example, is now around two percent—a dramatic improvement. Yet even with that lower rate Egypt's population will increase from 57 million to 100 million by the second decade of the twenty-first century. The long-range future of the planet may be good. It is the next several decades that could be frightful.

I take issue with the assumption that European and Arab exploitation had a sudden, dramatic effect on West Africa's social and cultural climate. For example, the taking of slaves was elemental to the medieval despotisms of the Ashanti, Dahomey, and Yoruba states. As Roland Oliver writes in his definitive work *The African Experience*, "the general consensus among the European observers who travelled [in tropical West Africa] during the nineteenth century was that approximately half of the population were slaves. . . . It is against some such background . . . of slave trading within Africa that the development of an intercontinental trade in African slaves has to be considered."

Scotia Luhrs's living experience in the Ivory Coast is welcome news. Unfortunately, the fact that most of the people in a given locale are law-abiding does not alter the possibility that a critical mass of criminality may exist, negatively affecting community development. It is undeniable that shantytowns in Turkey are far

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more successful as way stations toward the middle class than are shantytowns in West Africa.

More on Feminism

At the risk of running the discussion of Wendy Kaminer's article "Feminism's Identity Crisis" (October *Atlantic*) into the ground, I would like to support Nina D. Gaspich's observation (Letters, January *Atlantic*) that "many otherwise liberal persons of both sexes . . . are uncomfortable with a no-restrictions abortion policy." I have yet to see the question worded "Do you support unlimited abortions in the first trimester only?" I suspect that the majority support for abortion rights alleged by Kaminer would seem less unqualified if some of us were given that option.

Sarah R. Taggart
Ann Arbor, Mich.

In her letter to the editor (January *Atlantic*) Deborah Hayford Weiss states that "feminism as ideology requires us to accept as facts doctrines that many of us are sensible enough to reject." One of those supposed feminist doctrines is "the insistence that violence is a 'male' attribute." But the enormous discrepancy in rates of male and female violence has nothing to do with doctrine. Year after year the FBI Uniform Crime Reports inform us that approximately 90 percent of violent crimes are committed by men. In 1990 the exact figure was 88.7 percent. When it comes to murder—the most accurately reported crime—89.7 percent of reported murders in 1990 were committed by males and 10.3 percent by females. That same year 30 percent of female murder victims were killed by husbands or boyfriends (four percent of male victims were killed by wives or girlfriends), and 102,555 forcible rapes were reported to the police.

To the best of my knowledge, the FBI is not a feminist front organization.

Myriam Miedzian
New York, N. Y.

I was shaken by the hymn of hate against feminists which you printed in your January Letters section over the signature of Deborah Hayford Weiss. On the other hand, we feminists must be doing

something right if we manage to get people like her and Steve Sailer (who also detests us) so riled up. One of the functions of reformers is, after all, to disturb people.

I reject Weiss's view that I and other feminists show a "feverish preoccupation with abortion." We are committed to the position that women and girls should not have to die from illegal abortions as thousands did each year before abortion was decriminalized. And we are defending women's rights against continuous attack from a well-organized and ruthless opposition that is attempting to nullify the law of the land. We would happily turn our attention elsewhere if the anti-abortionists decided to confine themselves to non-coercive and legal acts.

Those of us who spend our lives in hand-to-hand combat with disease, pain, anguish, and death will continue to work against rape, spousal abuse, and restrictions on abortion. I hope Weiss returns to her own safe world where she lives untouched by tragedy and despair. She has neither the comprehension nor the compassion to function in the imperfect world in which the rest of us toil.

Jeanne Richie, R.N.
San Pablo, Calif.

The Cost of Coal

Robert Cullen relies on outdated studies in "The True Cost of Coal" (December *Atlantic*). Current economic evidence shows that the cost of coal, even when its external costs and benefits are considered, is still less than that of other fossil and renewable fuels.

Cullen suggests that a complete accounting of the environmental "externalities" of coal combustion would cause an increase in coal prices from \$20 a ton to \$200 a ton, paving the way for solar and other renewable technologies to compete against coal-fired plants. This estimate is based on externality values adopted by a few state regulators, reflecting the early literature in environmental cost accounting.

More recent analyses by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory paint an entirely different picture of the costs and benefits of coal-based electricity generation. Using site-specific computer modeling of the environmental impact of new coal-fired

plants, the Oak Ridge study found that actual damages from the coal fuel cycle amount to one tenth of a cent per kilowatt-hour of electricity. This is a negligible fraction of the national average residential electric rate of eight cents per kwh, and a far cry from Cullen's tenfold fuel-cost increase.

The Oak Ridge research also expanded the early cost-accounting literature by quantifying the economic benefits of coal mining. A typical large underground coal mine employs 500 miners, each earning \$40,000 a year, roughly twice the national average wage. Overall, the U.S. coal industry generates \$80 billion of economic activity annually and supports seven indirect jobs for each employed miner. Not surprisingly, the net employment benefits estimated in the Oak Ridge study offset virtually all the environmental costs.

Coal will remain an economic fuel of choice for power generation here and abroad for decades. But the "externalities" of coal utilization will increasingly shift toward the developing world, where coal is plentiful and environmental regulation is scarce. In the long run the true cost of coal will be measured by our ability to develop and to export the technologies that generate the most energy from a Btu of fuel with the lowest pollutant emissions. The global market for our clean-coal technologies promises substantial benefits both for the American economy and for the world environment.

Eugene M. Trisko
Berkeley Springs, W. Va.

Robert Cullen questions our country's coal-based electricity-generation process and associated costs. Unfortunately, he fails to address both the benefits of using coal to satisfy our energy needs and the total truth relative to coal mining.

Since the OPEC embargo of the 1970s, coal has enabled our nation significantly to reduce dependence on foreign energy for electricity generation. Domestic coal use has doubled over the past twenty years, and the introduction of highly efficient and cleaner combustion technologies means that coal can be burned today without any environmental degradation. It is today's clean, reliable, and inexpensive electricity that drives our great economy and modern way of life.

Although coal mining has a dangerous past, as do most human endeavors, the

industry today has a lower incidence of occupational injury than timber, construction, and farming, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And occupational injury is more likely in both the food and general-merchandise-stores industries than in the coal-mining industry. Better safety records are attributable to continued technological improvements and to improved safety training and technical information.

And what about the environmental and societal benefits of using coal? Included in the calculations must be such benefits as the \$81 billion of activity generated in the U.S. economy by coal; the fact that for each job in the coal industry seven additional jobs are created elsewhere in the United States (that's 1.1 million jobs); the fact that almost 40 percent of coal's sale price is returned to federal, state, and local governments in the form of taxes (more than double the percentage paid by oil and almost six times the percentage paid by natural gas); the fact that U.S. coal exports contribute nearly \$5 billion annually to the positive side of the nation's trade balance; and the fact that for every billion dollars of coal produced there is an ultimate demand in the U.S. economy for approximately \$25 billion of electricity, \$10 billion of transportation, and \$27 billion of business services.

There certainly are other means of generating electricity, but of what value are they if society can't afford them? Perhaps that is why many attempt to inflate the cost of coal artificially by applying inappropriate external costs, thus rendering coal too expensive when compared with alternative energy sources.

Terry G. Ross
Denver, Colo.

Robert Cullen submits an irrefutable proposition: economic activities (for example, coal mining) that impose "external" costs (that is, pollution) should be forced to "internalize" those costs in the price of the goods produced. Given his examples, Cullen's conclusion that the price of coal—and, derivatively, of electricity—fails to internalize costs is astounding. His evidence suggests the opposite conclusion.

The American coal industry *does* internalize, to a remarkable degree, the cost both of producing coal and of consuming it. As Cullen concedes, reclamation, cou-

able; it is not. Nevertheless, does anyone seriously suggest that oranges and avocados be removed from our diet, or that an excise be placed on the price of fresh fruit, to compensate survivors for the premature deaths of farm workers? Cullen proposes precisely this economic remedy for the coal industry.

The use of hypothetical external "control costs" by utilities is problematic, for reasons that are suggested by the author and for other reasons that he missed. The Clean Air Act of 1970 limited emissions of sulfur dioxide. The emissions standard for SO₂ was established at a

level known to be safe for human health. Therefore, any imputed cost assigned by planners for sulfur dioxide is excessive. It ignores the "price" that Congress has already imposed by statute and that coal producers and utilities have paid by reducing emissions. Assigning any imputed costs to carbon-dioxide emissions is even more questionable, because no one has ever suggested that carbon dioxide represents a health risk to people. For these reasons coal does not bear an appropriate cost for these imputed

externalities; rather, the tariff on coal is deliberately punitive.

Blair M. Gardner
St. Louis, Mo.

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pled with taxes paid on coal production and used to reclaim older mines, have effectively internalized the environmental cost of mining. Workers'-compensation programs and direct-benefit payments to persons who have been disabled by pneumoconiosis (black lung) have reduced mining deaths and the rate of occupational diseases.

To put this last point in perspective: during the 1980s coal-mining fatalities were approximately equal to agricultural fatalities in a single state—California—over the same period. I do not suggest that fifty-four deaths annually is accept-

It is about time that we see energy sources valued at their "true" costs. Robert Cullen's article should be just the beginning of a public discussion of the external costs of energy production and use. For example, what are the national-security costs, including the Persian Gulf War, of continuing to import oil? Economists have given values anywhere from \$60 to \$250 a barrel. Yet we continue to

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SEASON PREVIEW

North America's Jazz and Blues Festivals

RIVERBLUES

May 21-22

JAMBALAYA JAM

May 28-30

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Two consecutive weekends of blues, jazz, and Dixieland music kick off the summer season in Philadelphia. RiverBlues, the biggest blues festival on the East Coast, celebrates the beginning of summer with two days of nonstop music on four stages at Penn's Landing Plaza. RiverBlues highlights will include performances by the Robert Cray Band, Bob Weir and Rob Wasserman, and Otis Rush. The Jambalaya Jam continues the celebration the following weekend with music from the bayou—New Orleans Dixieland, jazz, and zydeco. The ninth annual jam will include performances by the Neville Brothers, Dr. John, the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Randy Newman, and Buckwheat Zydeco. The Junior Jam provides activities for children, while samples of the food and crafts of New Orleans are available at both events. For information call (215) 636-1666.

JAZZ ASPEN

June 22-26

Snowmass, Colorado

Billed as "Le Cirque du Jazz," the fourth annual Jazz Aspen festival boasts an impressive lineup of international artists. The festival pays tribute to its sister festival in France, Jazz Marciac, with performances by France-based bands The Toulouse and Banana Jazz, and an impromptu collaboration between American and French jazz musicians. The internationally acclaimed Cuban pianist Gonzalo Rubalcaba will make his American festival debut. The Neville Brothers,



the Zion Harmonizers, and Bobby McFerrin will also perform at Jazz Aspen. Admission to two of the concerts is free, and tickets to the remaining performances range from \$5 to \$50. For information call (303) 923-8807.

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE JAZZ DE MONTRÉAL

June 30-July 10

Montreal, Canada

For eleven days Montreal hosts North America's largest jazz festival. One and a half million people are expected to attend the fifteenth annual event, which consists of more than 350 free outdoor performances and more than a hundred ticketed indoor events. Performers at last year's festival included the Herbie Hancock Trio, Keith Jarrett, Kid Creole and the Coconuts, and Grover Washington Jr. The outdoor performances, from noon to 11:30 P.M. each day, will take place on six stages at Montreal's recently renovated esplanade at the Place des Arts. Indoor performances run from 4:00 P.M. to midnight at venues throughout the city. Tick-

et prices range from \$19 to \$45. For information call (514) 871-1881.

THE WATERFRONT BLUES FESTIVAL

July 1-July 4

Tom McCall Waterfront Park
Portland, Oregon

Calling itself the country's mellowest, the Waterfront Blues Festival also serves a cause. Two cans of food and \$3, the suggested donation for admission, buys fans four days of music and a warm, fuzzy feeling. All the food and most of the money raised by the festival benefits the Oregon Food Bank, which gathered 41,000 pounds of food at last year's festival. And, of course, there's the music—national and regional blues acts performing nonstop from noon to 10:00 P.M. Past performers have included Otis Rush, Joe Louis Walker, and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. This year more than 70,000 blues fans are expected to fill Waterfront Park's riverfront amphitheater for performances by Terry Evans, Johnny Nocturne, and more. The festival concludes with Fourth of July fireworks. For information call (503) 282-0555.

KANSAS CITY'S BIG BLUES & JAZZ FESTIVAL

July 29-31

Kansas City, Missouri

Dozens of the country's top blues and jazz acts and a refreshing collection of regional performers will convene for Kansas City's Big Blues & Jazz Festival at Penn Valley Park. Mayor Emanuel Cleaver calls the festival, which this year has expanded from two days to three, "a major-league event that brings together a friendly, diverse crowd of folks—not to mention the best barbecue in the civilized world." More than 100,000 folks are expected to turn out for performances by Kansas City legend Jay McShann, Delbert McClinton, the Staple Singers, and more. Advance tickets for all three days cost \$8. For information call (816) 753-3378.

SAN FRANCISCO BLUES FESTIVAL

September 23-25

San Francisco, California

San Francisco's is the oldest blues festival in the United States—celebrating its twenty-second year—and its setting is arguably the most picturesque. Friday's free afternoon concert is staged at the Embarcadero, in downtown San Francisco. All remaining performances take place on the great lawn of the Fort Mason Arts Complex, in the Marina district, with striking views of the Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco Bay, and the Marin headlands. Close to 20,000 people are expected to attend the festival this year for nonstop music from 11:00 A.M. until 5:30 P.M. Tickets cost \$16.50 in advance of the festival and \$20 otherwise. For information call (415) 826-6837.

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The truly environmentally benign nature of nuclear power, and the fact that all its costs are internalized, have provoked new thinking about the future role of this energy source. It is likely that as we learn more about the real costs involved with using the competing energy sources, nuclear power will appear increasingly attractive.

Frank R. Bruce
*Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Oak Ridge, Tenn.*

Robert Cullen replies:

As I reported, reasonable economists differ greatly in their estimates of the external costs of coal. But I can't give much weight to several of the arguments advanced by Eugene Trisko, Terry Ross, and Blair Gardner. The number of workers' deaths that are incurred in agriculture, forestry, and coal extraction may be of interest to someone who is trying to choose among careers in farming, logging, and mining. But it is completely irrelevant to the choice among power sources. Only a comparison with the number of deaths incurred in nuclear, wind, solar, biomass, or other generation methods is relevant. The \$80 billion that coal may generate in economic activity is similarly irrelevant unless it can be shown that alternative power sources would not generate a comparable amount. And I most emphatically did not "concede" that nearly all the environmental costs of mining coal (not to speak of burning it) have been internalized. Anyone who suggests that they have been has not, I suspect, spent much time hiking through the scrubby growth that characterizes even the most thoroughly reclaimed strip-mine sites, or fishing in the sterile streams that drain so many coal basins.

The Shock-Art Fallacy

In "The Shock-Art Fallacy" (February *Atlantic*), Martha Bayles makes several cogent points about avant-garde absurdities, chiefly that the use of obscenity as a mode of expression is nothing new. But she fails to define obscenity except as a subjective concept; nor does she seem aware that many of the humane artists she cites as exemplars were subject to often brutal censorship, in their era and today. In 1969 Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* was bowdlerized by its American distributors. Mark Twain's finest novel was thought blasphemous upon publication, and today is barred from many libraries, for using the word "nigger" and for its depictions of slavery and racism. Guilty liberals and Bible Belt reactionaries alike find Huck Finn's saga morally reprehensible. Most disturbing to me, Bayles implicitly justifies self-censorship and public prudishness as the only alternatives to government-sponsored book burnings, and in doing so reviles the name of a great dramatist.

Before his death in 1918, Frank Wedekind completed a body of work (*Spring's Awakening*, *The Marquis of Keith*, and the *Lulu* plays) that influenced other playwrights (Brecht), composers (Alban Berg), and filmmakers (G. W. Pabst). Throughout his life and beyond, his plays were banned or ruthlessly sanitized, less for their sexual candor than for their dearth of sanctimony. Some have yet to be performed in English as Wedekind wrote them. He was a humane and moral satirist, whatever his conduct away from his desk; and in his own time his acting was highly praised, even if his cabaret performances weren't. Trendy sensationalism will die naturally; freedom of expression is in constant danger and must be defended with vigilance, even at the price of tolerating junk. But to equate Wedekind with Karen Finley is stupidity within the ken of Jesse Helms. And stupidity is the root of all aesthetic evils.

David A. Murphy
Milford, Conn.

Free speech appears these days to be a losing stock among the intellectually credentialed. A few months back Jonathan Alter wrote in *Newsweek* that if censorship could put an end to violent rap, "then



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maybe we need more of it." More recently, in the *New York Observer*, the lapsed libertarian Nicholas von Hoffman proposed punitive government action against the employers of Howard Stern. These are only the most striking among a whole catalogue of such interdictions; indeed, the emerging consensus against saying what one pleases is so broad that one is tempted simply to take "The Shock Art Fallacy" as more of the same and move wearily on to the next *nihil obstat*. But someone should point out that the central problem with Martha Bayles's screed, as with many such by our new breed of censor-summoners, is a false distinction between the providers of poisonous cultural substances and their consumers.

The whole "shock-art" issue would be a blip on the screen, certainly beneath Bayles's notice, if some entertainers of that sort did not have large constituencies. *Basic Instinct* was no art-house hit; millions of popcorn-munching proles descended on the theaters, probably not to watch Michael Douglas clench his teeth, almost certainly to see Sharon Stone uncross her legs. *Roseanne*, the sitcom that Bayles's former *Wall Street Journal* colleague Dorothy Rabinowitz likes to assail for its coarse picture of family life, is among the most popular shows going. Howard Stern is not playing on National Public Radio. Whatever one thinks of "shock art," it demonstrably has broad, not narrow, support.

Bayles's exotic flourishes notwithstanding (for example, the exhumation of Frank Wedekind as one of her culture-culprits), it is this central paradox that she cannot escape. Her attitudinizing about shame and standards sounds reasonable enough in the context of Wedekind and Cezanne, but when one realizes that she is talking about a nation that regularly revels in *America's Most Wanted*, gangsta rap, and various soft- and hard-core variants of junk culture, it becomes ridiculous.

Bayles heaps scorn on those artists who disagree with her, calling them "isolated from the rest of the world" and in need of "a reality check." I should say it was the other way around. If she were really addressing the will of the public, as she pretends to, she might acknowledge the popularity of vulgar entertainments, and then explain why she wants us to stop indulging in them for our own good. She might even get us to agree. But her insis-

tence that "obscenity as art is everywhere" only because some alien force has overtaken our culture suggests that her real audience is made up of other journalistic would-be cultural watchdogs who speak of the public's need for moral reform as if *in loco parentis*. Bayles will doubtless call me a cultural bomb-thrower for saying so, but if repression comes to America, this is where it will have begun.

Roy Edroso
New York, N. Y.

Martha Bayles certainly presents a point well taken—that because art is sometimes shocking we assume that everything both shocking and labeled "art" is art. Along with the "neoteric fallacy" (the idea that new forms of art make old ones invalid, as new surgical techniques replace old ones, rather than simply adding to the realm of possibilities), that assumption has led to the low public esteem for visual art in the United States.

However, to blame Fluxus for Piero Manzoni's canned "artist's shit" (1961), as she does, seems a trifle unfair and misses Manzoni's point. As a founding member of the Fluxus group (1962), I can assure you that most of us had never even heard of Manzoni until well after his death (1963). I doubt, furthermore, that he had ever heard of any of us, apart from our mutual friend Daniel Spoerri. Also, Manzoni's meaning in that "piece" was an ironic and humorous complaint that an artist's souvenirs and relics were worth more than his serious achievements, that people cared more about his letters, autographs, and statements than about his actual works. Alas, because it *was* so outré, it has become the thing by which Manzoni is best known, thus verifying his point and Bayles's. He probably meant that piece as a statement; we violate his point, therefore, if we call it art.

Dick Higgins
Barrytown, N. Y.

Martha Bayles replies:

Dick Higgins, at least, got my point—that the shock provoked by the great works of modernism was different from that provoked by today's shock art. Mr. Higgins, unsurprisingly, is the only letter writer actually associated with one of the movements I discuss. Mr. Higgins and David Murphy should note that I compared today's shock art with particular

actions of Manzoni's and Wedekind's, not with their best work.

Roy Edroso didn't read my article carefully. I do admit that shock art is popular. But so is the revulsion against it. My question is whether this is good or bad, because, as I wrote, "the danger is that such popular revulsion can lead to backlash, censorship, even repression." As for Jonathan Alter, Nicholas von Hoffman, and Dorothy Rabinowitz, if Mr. Edroso dislikes their opinions, he should write letters to them.

I resent being called a "censor-summoner." I don't advocate censorship; I warn against it. But I also insist that governments are not obliged to fund anarchistic art.

Finally, I agree that obscenity is hard to define—just ask the Supreme Court. But the definition I borrow from Harry Clor is hardly "subjective." Mr. Murphy's scolding about definitions would be more convincing if his own language were not so heavy-handed and polemical.

The Turn

William Langewiesche's article "The Turn" (December *Atlantic*) was fascinating. However, I must take exception to Langewiesche's use of the term "gyroscopic compass" to describe one of the essential blind-flying instruments of the early days of aviation.

The gyroscopic compass was developed by Elmer Sperry for use on ships; it cannot be used on aircraft because the centrifugal force is too severe when airplanes turn and yaw at high speed. This type of compass detects the direction of the earth's spin axis rather than the earth's magnetic pole. A steel ship's own magnetism interferes with the proper operation of the ship's magnetic compass—hence the great advantage of the gyroscopic compass, now used universally on ships at sea.

The clever little gyro instrument invented by Elmer Sperry for aircraft is not a compass at all; it doesn't know north from south and is completely nonmagnetic. It is a small gyro wheel kept spinning by a stream of air impinging on buckets around the rim, mounted on gimbels, and fitted with a dial on which direction can be read. The gyro has the unique property of "rigidity in space." It just wants to be left alone to float on delicate bearings

while the aircraft maneuvers all around it. The pilot sets the gyro dial to agree with a magnetic compass during straight and level flight, and then the aircraft may turn and bank all it wants, while the gyro keeps perfectly steady in direction. That is why it is one of the important and necessary blind-flying instruments.

In 1950 or thereabouts Sperry was able to "slave" the directional gyro to an electronic sensor of the earth's magnetic field, transforming the gyro into a true compass by gently coercing it back whenever it drifted away from the correct alignment with magnetic north. This eliminated the need to set the gyro manually to agree with the compass. The "slaved" gyro is still being used on all fully instrumented aircraft.

Francis West Jr.
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

William Langewiesche replies:

I owe thanks to Francis West for his excellent clarification of the difference between a ship's gyroscopic compass and an airplane's directional gyro. While writing my article, I suffered over that dis-

tinction, and decided to use the terms interchangeably in a compromise between technicality and relevance.

Advice & Consent

Cullen Murphy stated in his short article "Survivors" (December *Atlantic*) that "Johannes Brahms wrote a composition for two pianos called 'Variations on a Theme by J. Haydn,' which is the only place where this theme from Haydn, if it ever truly existed, can now be found."

The Divertimento in B flat (originally for wind octet), by Franz Josef Haydn, contains a brief but lovely second movement titled *St. Anthony's Chorale*, which was the theme for Brahms's popular set of orchestral variations, Opus 56a. The piano version mentioned in the article was Opus 56b.

Though the authenticity of the octet has occasionally been questioned—the 1954 *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* mentions Pleyel as a possible composer—the octet has been well known

to wind players and aficionados of eighteenth-century "band" music for two centuries and has been consistently attributed to Haydn.

Chris Wilhjelm
Montvale, N.J.

Les Daly's article "Beyond Sante Fe" (December *Atlantic*) was interesting, but it contained one geographical error. According to Daly, the village of Cloudcroft, in New Mexico's Sacramento Mountains, "boasts the southernmost ski area in the country."

That would surprise residents of Tucson, Arizona. They enjoy year-round skiing on 9,157-foot-high Mount Lemmon, in the Catalina range—some forty miles farther south than the Sacramentos.

Steve Lawson
Williamstown, Mass.

CORRECTION: In Corby Kummer's article "Hot Chocolate" (March *Atlantic*) the telephone number provided for ordering cocoa powder from the DeZaan Chocolate Company was wrong. The right number is 203-351-9605.

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THE M A A L M A N A C



Q & A

Why does orange juice taste terrible if one drinks it after brushing one's teeth?

Linda Bartoshuk, an experimental psychologist at the Yale School of Medicine, and John DeSimone, a physiologist at Virginia Commonwealth University, have written a paper on this question, in which they implicate a detergent and flavor-dispersing agent used in toothpaste. This substance, sodium lauryl sulfate, incidentally attacks tastebud membranes, which contain fatty compounds called phospholipids. It breaks down these fats—much as dish detergent breaks down fats—and is thought in so doing to temporarily alter the molecular structure of the membrane. As a result, tastes are distorted: anything that is normally sour seems bitter, and the ability to taste sugar is inhibited. Orange juice, which is composed of both tart and sweet elements, thus tastes bitter instead.



The Skies

May 10, an annular eclipse of the Sun occurs today, visible along a path from El Paso (at about 11:10 A.M. CDT) through Detroit (1:15 P.M. EDT) to Portland, Maine (1:45 P.M. EDT) as a brilliant ring of light surrounding the dark disk of the Moon. The rest of the nation will see a partial solar eclipse. 24, Full Moon, also known as the Milk, Hare, or Horses Get Fat Moon. A partial eclipse of the Moon, visible over most of the eastern United States, peaks tonight at 11:30 P.M. During the latter part of this month Mercury lies high in the evening sky, near Venus. Observers will need binoculars, patience, and a sky chart or a knowledgeable friend.

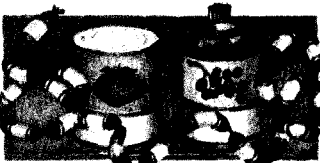


Environment

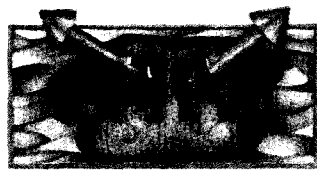
May 1, an Atlanta ordinance requiring that 10 percent of the total area of the city's parking lots be planted with trees and shrubs goes into effect today. The mandate is meant to improve air quality, soak up runoff, and beautify the downtown. 14, starting today all new dishwashers, clothes washers, and dryers must meet federal energy-efficiency standards. As a result, new models will use up to 17 percent less energy than average models currently in use. Manufacturers of dishwashers and clothes washers will focus on reducing hot-water consumption: dishwashers will have fewer fills per cycle, and the "warm" setting on clothes washers will be cooler than it has been. All new clothes dryers will have automatic shut-offs that sense when clothes are dry, which could result in higher prices for dryers but will cause less wear on clothes. The Department of Energy estimates that by the year 2015 the new standards will have saved some 790 trillion BTUs—enough energy to run five million houses for a year.

Food

May 8, comprehensive FDA labeling regulations that will enable consumers to compare directly the nutritional value of almost all packaged foods take effect today. Each item must display information about particular nutrients and the way in which the food fits into an overall daily diet; the focus is on preventing dietary excess



rather than guarding against deficiencies, as it was in the past. Other changes include standardizing serving sizes, regulation of the use of terms such as "light" and "healthy," and strict stipulations regarding claims about links between nutrition and disease. The new labels have been a long time coming: first mandated for a year ago this month, they were delayed by industry lobbying and by disagreements between the FDA and the USDA, which has issued comparable rules governing the labels for meat and poultry products, to take effect in July.

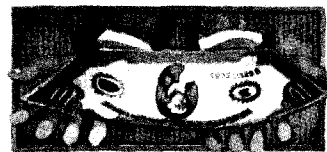


Government

May 23, the Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations submits its findings to the Secretaries of Commerce and Labor; it is charged with exploring whether new institutions or legal processes are needed to improve labor-management cooperation, keep labor disputes out of the courts, and increase productivity. 31, by today the United States and Russia will have aimed their intercontinental ballistic missiles away from each other, pointing them at targets in the open ocean or not programming them at all. The value of this action resides almost entirely in its symbolism: either country can, of course, redirect its missiles in a matter of minutes at any time.

Health & Safety

May 17, the patent expires on Tagamet, an anti-ulcer drug that limits stomach-acid production; the drug is expected to face a surge of competition from generic equivalents. Its manufacturer, SmithKline Beecham, has taken an unconventional tack in response: instead of raising the



drug's price, it has been offering a \$10 rebate on each month's supply, in the hope of developing loyal customers. (A recent report, though, contains more bad news for Tagamet: ulcers may be caused by bacteria, not acid, and therefore may be curable with antimicrobial agents.) Sixteen drugs in all will lose their patents this year, fueling the growth of generics, which now account for more than 40 percent of all prescriptions written in the United States.

50 Years Ago

Thomas Mann, writing in the May, 1944, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Democracy is of course primarily a claim, a demand of the majority for justice and equal rights. It is a justified demand from below. But in my eyes it is even more beautiful if it is good will, generosity, and love coming from the top down. I do not consider it very democratic if little Mr. Smith or Jones slaps Beethoven on the back and shouts: 'How are you, old man!' That is not democracy, but tactlessness and a lack of feeling for differences. But when Beethoven sings: 'Be embraced, ye millions, this kiss to all the world'—that is democracy. For he could say: 'I am a great genius and something quite special, but the people are a mob; I am much too proud and particular to embrace them.' Instead he calls them all his brothers. . . . That is democracy in its highest form, far removed from demagoguery and a flattering wooing of the masses."



Many visions, only one mind.

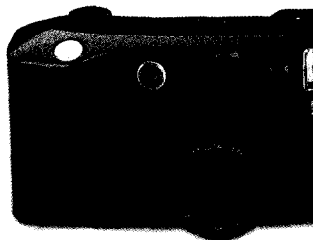


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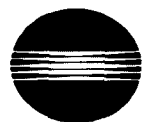
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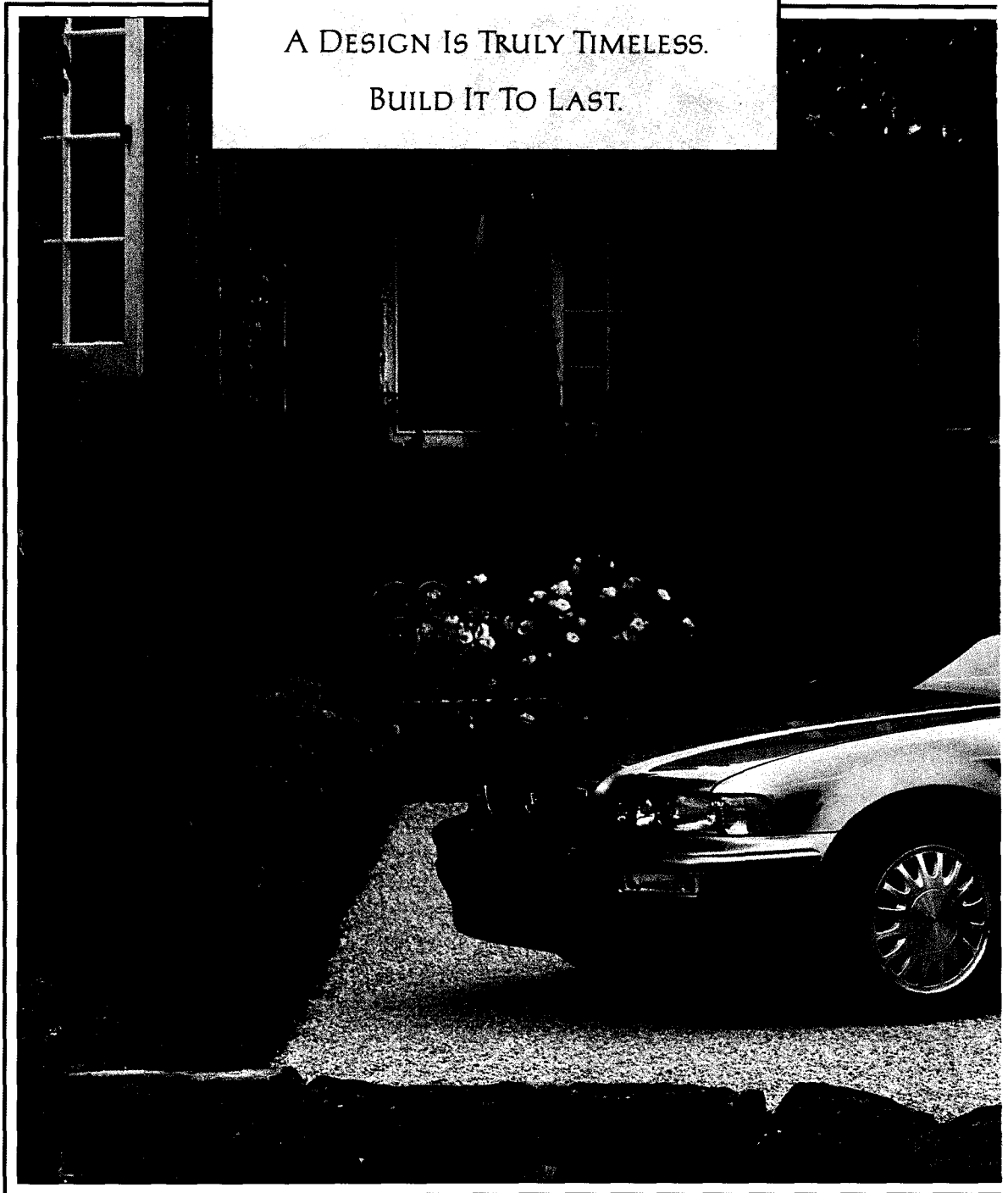
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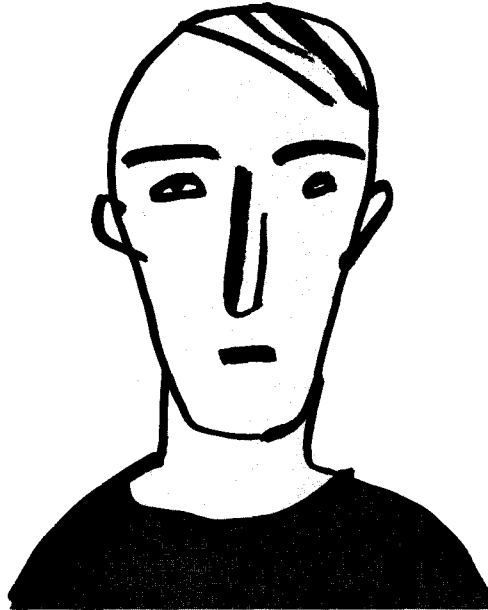
Is identity proliferation outstripping population growth?

MY wife was absorbed in a crime story in the newspaper one Sunday morning when she paused to read this sentence aloud: "They also discovered that he had been leading a double life." Her head rose from the newspaper. She said, "How?"

I knew what she meant: not How can someone leading a double life go undiscovered for a long period of time? but rather, How can anyone possibly lead two lives—give comfort to two spouses, pay two sets of bills, raise two sets of children? It is noteworthy that among fictional characters who lead double lives, a strikingly large proportion (think of Clark Kent and Diana Prince) have been endowed with superpowers—a nod, I now understand, toward realism. Just to make it through a typical day almost everyone I know must resort to the practice known as time-stuffing: eating while dressing, dictating while driving, reading while walking or watching television. During telephone calls the soft clicks of a computer keyboard being struck now seem to be standard background noise. There are occasions when, upon being interrupted politely with the words "Is this a bad time?," I must suppress a giddy, maniacal laugh, of the kind Herbert Lom descends into when Inspector Clouseau finally drives him over the edge.

In his book *The Condition of Postmodernity* the geographer David Harvey argues that Western civilization is in the grip of a condition he calls "time-space compression." This condition, which is becoming more pronounced, is characterized by a speedup in the pace of life so unremitting that "the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us." My wife and I recently estimated that, far from being capable of leading double lives, we need about 37 percent less content in the lives we already have. A strong argument can be made for even deeper cuts—scaling back one's affairs to accord with, say, the regime portrayed by John Cheever in one of his journals:

"My weekends went roughly like this. On Saturday mornings,



I played touch football until the noon whistle blew, when I drank Martinis for an hour or so with friends. On Saturday afternoons, I played Baroque music on the piano or recorder with an ensemble group. On Saturday nights, my wife and I either entertained or were entertained by friends. Eight o'clock Sunday morning found me at the Communion rail, and the Sunday passed pleasantly, according to the season, in skiing, scrub hockey, swimming, football, or backgammon. This sport was occasionally interrupted by the fact that I drove the old Mack engine for the volunteer fire department and also bred black Labrador retrievers."

Cheever at the time was in his forties, comfortable but by no means wealthy. He had young children, somewhere. Time-space compression was apparently well shy of its present point of advance. Here was a man with room in his life for another one—which, as we now know, he in fact had.

■ ■ ■

In reality, of course, people who live double lives almost always turn out to be bounders, and yet there is something horribly compelling about the impulse to which they have succumbed. Stephen Spender, in an essay on the poet Robert Bridges, uses the term "third person people" to describe those (like Bridges, in Spender's view) whose outward behavior and inner self are exactly congruent—those, as Spender says, who

have no hidden "I" within a public husk of "he" or "she." For most people, though, the alignment between first and third person is

never quite exact. Governor Mario Cuomo has on more than one occasion contrasted himself with a fictional WASP counterpart he derisively calls "Mark Conrad." Is it farfetched to suppose that some small part of Cuomo might actually find Conrad's life appealing? Everyone has at some point wondered idly what it would be like to be someone else. I suspect that most people, too, have given some thought to what name they might

by Cullen Murphy

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adopt if circumstances made it necessary—and have perhaps even fantasized about what such circumstances would be.

In Stephen King's book *The Dark Half* the protagonist, a novelist who has long written under a pseudonym, tells an interviewer from *People* magazine, "Thinking about writing under a pseudonym was like thinking about being invisible. The more I played with the idea, the more I felt that I would be . . . well . . . reinventing myself." Leading a true double life is an option only for the few, but the acquisition of a pseudonym offers some of the same rewards at a fraction of the cost. And although the fact has yet to be widely remarked even by anthroponomists, the scholars whose job it is to watch developments in the field of personal names, America has during the past few years entered a golden age of pseudonyms. As recently as two decades ago the number of people who regularly made use of a fabricated name, whether for purposes of concealment, aesthetics, or enhanced personal expression, was relatively limited, consisting largely of criminals, authors, nuns, and thespians (but not including Trevor Howard or Fay Wray, surprisingly). Then came the citizens'-band radio, which in the 1970s prompted millions of ordinary people to invent "handles" for purposes of communication on the highway. The CB radio prepared the way for an even more pervasive technology—the interactive computer network, many of whose services offer users the opportunity to give themselves pseudonyms. Both technologies have provided the cloak of anonymity, and Americans have shown that under such conditions they hardly need to be cajoled into donning new names—and, frequently, new personas to go with them. By several degrees of magnitude, more secondary identities are now in play than ever before in the nation's history. They easily number in the millions.

This is uncharted territory, and it remains to be seen what the ramifications will be for the broader social psychology. For one thing, the expansion in the number of pseudonyms is occurring at the same time as a subtle but perhaps significant evolution in the way pseudonyms are employed. Formerly, the relationship between real name and pseudonym was like that between the two sides of a coin: if one was visible, the other was not. Increasingly, though, both identities are being deployed at once, as if to suggest that a person's very being has undergone a kind of stock split. A book review in *The New York Times* carries the byline "Adam Smith," and the biographical blurb reads, "Adam Smith, a pseudonym for George J. W. Goodman, is the author of *The Money Game* and *The Roaring '80s*." Formulating the authorship of certain books has become less than straightforward: "By Ruth

Rendell writing as Barbara Vine." "By Michael Crichton writing as Jeffery Hudson." "By Anne Rice writing as Anne Rampling."

Is this the future—wielding more than one identity openly and simultaneously? Will parents someday give children a pseudonym at birth ("It was her grandmother's") in addition to the other names they customarily bestow? Tricky issues of etiquette are sure to arise. How will dinner invitations specify which persona's company is actually desired? Should Ruth Rendell be offended if asked to come as Barbara Vine?

■ ■ ■

Some will look askance at the proliferation of pseudonyms, seeing the potential for existential chaos. They may have a

point. Still, the belief that acts of self-creation are not only possible but in some sense what America is all about is one of the oldest strands running through our history. Historians and critics have for more than a century and a half invoked the idea of the American—pioneer in a vast Edenic frontier—as "the new Adam." Surely something along these lines animated a recent Libyan immigrant I heard about on the radio—Bishir Zegman, his name sounded like—who upon being granted American citizenship changed his name to Clint Eastwood. It may be appropriate to see the widespread adoption of pseudonyms in much the same way—to see it almost as a form of immigra-

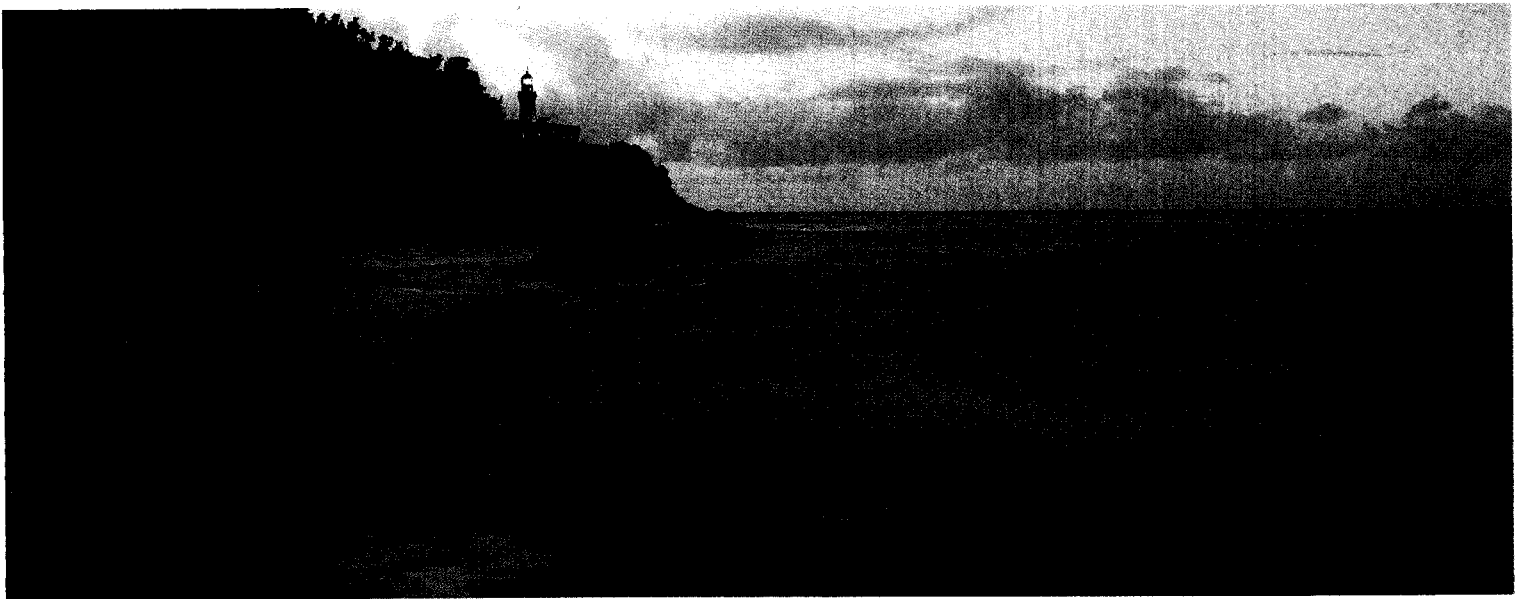


tion, one that in numerical terms happens now to dwarf the influx of corporeal immigrants. The motives that drive these new immigrants, these undocumented aliases, are familiar. There is the dream of opportunity, the desire to escape repression. Although pseudonymous entities may not enjoy all the benefits of citizenship, in some states they can legally obtain a driver's license and take out a marriage license. As has been the case with previous waves of immigrants, some pseudonyms will end up inhabiting ghettos (mostly in cyberspace) that are not well integrated into mainstream American life, speaking their own language, maintaining strange customs.

No doubt some people will end up being swallowed by their pseudonyms entirely, as people have been in the past, forsaking that spent husk of "he" or "she" for a newly invented "I." Recently there came in the mail a new book, *Scram: Relocating Under a New Identity*, written by a lawyer named James S. Martin, which offers practical tips on how to slip the tightening bonds of present circumstance in an irreversible and undiscoverable way. This is not, of course, something that I would actually do. But I must confess that now and then when I hear the words "Is this a bad time?" my eyes stray unbidden to *Scram*. A bad time? No, it's not a bad time. In fact, it's now or never. ☼

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Taxi!

In New York City, fares curse cabbies whose English is terrible and driving is worse. Cabbies curse taxi-fleet owners and a system that thrives on inexperience. As is often the case in New York, everyone is right to be angry

“EXCUSE me, sir, why it is called Avenue of the Americas?”

Ten students, nearly all of them from the Indian subcontinent, gaze expectantly at Murray Liebman, a native New Yorker and former cabbie who is midway through a lesson on the subject of one-way streets. Liebman is their guide to a new life in their

new country. For eight hours a day he has been drilling them in bridge and tunnel crossings, in appropriate car chitchat, in the risks of FREE KALISTAN bumper stickers. Yes, this is taxi school, an occupational requirement now that immigrants make up at least 90 percent of New York City’s new driver applicants.

by Sheryl Fragin

“Why do I call lower Manhattan ‘the old city’?” Liebman asks.

“It is crowded since the ancient time most probably.”

Despite obvious language problems, the students are intensely focused, take copious notes, and radiate enthusiasm. Many left good jobs at home and are highly educated. During a break they gather around a visitor’s laptop, shooting questions about megahertz and memory.

Within a few months, though, most of their optimism will be gone. The twelve-hour shifts, showdowns with competing cabs, and perpetually clogged traffic can translate to less than \$50 a day. And that’s before taking into account the daily assault from city enforcement agents: taxi inspectors, traffic cops, sanitation cops, parking cops, environmental inspectors, bridge-and-tunnel officers, you name it. “Every yahoo with a summons book can target a cabdriver,” says Lawrence Goldberg, the

A full queue at La Guardia Airport means a two-hour wait for a fare

secretary-treasurer of Local 3036 of the Taxi Drivers Union. "I don't think there's any other industry under such scrutiny." At the end of five years, according to city statistics, fewer than half the new drivers will remain on the job.

To be sure, cab driving was never easy. Cabbies have always been prey to muggers, have always had trouble finding a bathroom, have always contended with ornery passengers and farebeaters. But throughout the eighties conditions grew worse—so much worse that nearly all the old-timers got out of the business. What they left behind is the latest version of an immigrant sweatshop. "When I first started, in 1978," says Charles Francis, a driver from Haiti, "I would work eight or ten hours and make my money. Now I have to work twelve or fourteen hours, six days a week instead of five. If I had a choice now, I'd never do it, but what am I going to start doing at sixty years old?"

New York, of course, isn't the only city with an immigrant taxicab force. Washington, Boston, and Chicago have all felt the same demographic pressures to some degree. But New York cabbies define the species. They're the ones in jokes, in movies, in nightmares. And although it may be hard for those who have ridden white-knuckled with them to work up sympathy, there is disturbingly good reason for their recklessness and frenzy.

WHAT makes New York's taxi industry fascinating and absurd is its free-market medallion system, which, despite freezing the number of cabs—as systems in other cities do—allows such liberal transfer rights that the street value of a medallion hit \$182,000 last December. New Yorkers wanting to own a medallion—a simple aluminum hood ornament—will mortgage themselves to the teeth even before buying the car and covering the insurance, transfer, and broker fees that go with it.

That's why most drivers lease their cars, paying about \$80 for the day shift (typically 5:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.) or \$90 for the overnight. Figuring in another \$20 for gas, the driver is at least \$100 in the hole the second he leaves the garage. Every fare and tip above that is his, but the driver often doesn't start earning for himself until his eighth hour in the car. Some days there's almost no profit at all, especially when things go wrong. "Like

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The Atlantic Monthly

last night—my cab broke down and I had to call guys to come pick me up," says a driver from Ghana who asked that his name not be used. "I couldn't even make the lease."

Drivers largely have the city Taxi and Limousine Commission to thank for such headaches. Created in 1971 to regulate rates and improve passenger service, the commission completely transformed the industry eight years later, when, bowing to pressure from fleet owners, it decided to allow taxi leasing. Until then drivers earned a percentage of their daily receipts. Gas and repair costs were covered by the garage, as were health benefits and vacations. "The owners were very accessible in those days," says Allen Stevens, a taxi-school teacher who has written a doctoral thesis on the changeover to leasing. "There wasn't a whole lot of bureaucracy" in an old-style garage. "You felt important—it was a very nice place to work." It was also a place where drivers could make an adequate living and even support a family.

But once leasing caught on, in the early eighties, the picture changed dramatically. New management companies began renting medallions from small investors and leasing them to drivers through large garages. No longer did most drivers have contact with the medallion owners, and no longer did owners bear much responsibility for drivers. There was no more unemployment and Social Security to cover, no more risk to share. If a driver had a bad night, management still got the fee up front. Vacations were gone, and it became nearly impossible to find a driver with health insurance.

"You started having a lot of turnover once leasing started," Stevens says. "The old veterans started retiring. In terms of management, the system of reward and punishment was replaced by coercion and punishment." Drivers who previously had gotten bonus checks after a good shift suddenly had to pay steep fines for returning their cars even five minutes late.

The new arrangement had another unfortunate effect: by guaranteeing a constant, predictable revenue stream for the first time, it helped send medallion prices soaring. Investors began snapping them up as if they were just another stock or bond. By 1989 medallions were selling for about \$140,000, nearly triple the price they had commanded in 1980. "There is

economic exploitation in the industry, because drivers must work long, hard hours to pay back the medallion owner," says Elizabeth A. Roistacher, a Queens College economics professor who served on a mayoral taxicab committee in the early eighties.

City-approved fare hikes reward the owner while sometimes penalizing the driver: by raising the value of a medallion, they increase the owner's equity and allow him to collect higher daily lease rates. The lease hikes swallow as much as half of the driver's extra earnings, and drivers claim that most of the rest is lost to depressed ridership.

Not surprisingly, the Taxi and Limousine Commission is far more concerned with the interests of taxi-fleet owners—a formidable political lobby—than with those of a ragtag band of drivers whose predominant language is Urdu. Even though many drivers oppose a fare increase that owners are currently demanding, the commission seems barely to hear them. "No one has come forward and said the driver doesn't get a fair part of the raise," the TLC's chairman, Fidel Del Valle, insisted last December. Yet several opponents of the increase said exactly that at a public hearing the month before. "[Drivers] know that the lease price will jump, business will decline, and tips will disappear," Henry Zeiger, of the Lease Drivers Coalition, told the taxi commissioners. "Their economic condition, about which the TLC shows little curiosity, is deplorable."

Zeiger and others are particularly galled that garages don't even have to show profit-and-loss statements to back up their stories of hardship. Such information is often required of other regulated businesses before they are granted rate hikes, but all the fleet operators have supplied is proof of their rising costs, such as car insurance and workmen's compensation. "It's obvious that they're eager to conceal the numbers," Zeiger says, "because the numbers would argue against a fare increase."

Even without the profit statements evidence suggests that fleet operators and owners continue to make a healthy profit. One good indicator, according to Roistacher, is the trend in medallion prices. From 1988 to 1993 prices increased by about 50 percent. Part of that increase reflects favorable borrowing terms, but the fact that lease rates also rose during that

period could indicate that business has been good. No one disputes that owners' expenses have increased more steeply; the question is whether that equals hardship or just slightly lower profits.

The TLC seems to buy the owners' arguments wholeheartedly. According to Del Valle, the commission's chairman, even if drivers lose half the increase to higher lease rates, they will recoup lost passengers within a short time of a fare hike. "The fare increase cannot go to the driver," he said in exasperation last December. "Who's going to pay for the insurance?" Del Valle was equally bothered by the question of whether the agency should regulate lease rates. "Nobody has demonstrated there's a need for that, other than drivers complaining they don't want to pay higher lease rates," he said. (When asked to confirm quotations for this article, in March, Del Valle said he'd had a change of heart about the complaints of drivers, citing new empirical evidence that they are indeed not doing very well financially.)

At least one of Del Valle's predecessors is quick to call the system exploitative and overdue for reform. "Looking back, I think maybe we should have tried regulating leases," says Gorman Gilbert, a former TLC chairman and now the director of the Institute for Transportation Research and Education at North Carolina State University. Gilbert, though, is responsible for implementing a TLC move that has proved devastating to drivers. In 1987, to his later regret, the agency began enforcing a ban on two-way radios in cabs, wiping out a thriving business in corporate livery service. The move seemed justified at the time: members of minority groups accused drivers of switching on their "on radio call" lights whenever they wanted to avoid stopping. But the ban resulted in a new industry of livery, or "black," cars, which stole the prized corporate accounts. There are now some 8,000 black cars, more than two thirds the number of "yellow" cabs. Although they can't legally pick up street hails, they have taken away enough business to make life much harder for cabbies.

Is it any wonder that a city facing a \$2.3 billion budget deficit won't second-guess a moneymaking agency? In fiscal 1993 the TLC collected \$25 million in licensing and other fees and nearly \$5

million on 82,310 summonses. After expenses, it contributed almost \$5 million to the city's coffers—and this fiscal year it promises to deliver even more, because it expects to issue 3,000 more tickets. Although the agency strenuously denies giving its inspectors ticket quotas, the language in the latest mayor's management report and city budget makes clear that fewer tickets than planned would create revenue shortfalls.

"There's no question about it, it's a revenue enhancement," says Richard Weinberg, an attorney who until seven years ago was chief judge for the TLC's own court system. "Especially now that some ninety percent of the drivers are non-English-speakers, the TLC and the city have basically used them as a taxation source. There are a lot more inspectors now than ten years ago. In my day there were far fewer summonses, and they were for serious things. Now the drivers are convenient victims."

The rule book is staggering—forty-six letter-size pages of single-spaced minutiae that make no attempt at simple English. Many rules seem trivial: "A driver shall not operate a taxicab having any signs not specifically enumerated in these rules. . . ." Others just seem unfair: "A driver while on duty shall not lock either of the rear doors. . . ." This when forty-three cab and livery drivers were killed and hundreds more robbed last year, and when the New York City Police Department, in a special safety pamphlet for drivers, has recommended locking doors at stop signs and lights.

Getting called on any rule is expensive. The driver loses several hours of work to attend a hearing he virtually never wins. Even though the TLC claims to have a 75 percent conviction rate for passenger-initiated complaints (the majority of hearings are initiated by inspectors), a close look at 222 such hearings held last October shows that only four percent ended in acquittal.

That might explain why drivers look so grim in the waiting room of the TLC's main building, in Times Square. Of course, anyone might feel a bit morose after a few hours of encampment there. About sixty cabbies sit millimeters apart in undersized hard-backed chairs. Large fans operate even in winter to circulate moist, fetid air. The floor looks as if it last saw a mop when Reagan was in the



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White House. This is not a place that invokes a sense of jurisprudence.

Out of the hundred part-time judges at the TLC, only a handful are black or Hispanic, let alone Pakistani or Indian, in an industry where half the new drivers come from the Indian subcontinent. None of the judges receives any cross-cultural training, and for \$182 a day the city isn't attracting the law-review crowd. "Even though we get paid, I consider it donating time to the city," says Judge Eugene Glicksman, who supplements his immigration practice with TLC work once or twice a week.

Roughly 400 hearings are held each day, so a typical case goes by very quickly, sometimes concluding with a guilty verdict before the cabbie seems aware that the hearing has begun. There are no TLC translators; drivers either bring a friend or, more often, grab someone in the waiting room whose English is only marginally better than their own.

"Why weren't you here to answer your summons on October 4?" Judge Peter Mazer asks Sikandar Khan one day in mid-November. They are sitting in an official hearing room, a tiny, airless closet with a rodent problem and an indeterminate odor. Khan looks befuddled as Mazer recites a series of incriminating statements, ending each with a phrase like "isn't that correct?" But the cabbie warms to Mazer's friendly demeanor and agrees with everything—hanging him-

self. It is apparent that he understands none of it.

"You offer no meritorious defense," Mazer concludes, before announcing the penalty.

"The case is closed?"

"Case closed."

"Thanks," the stunned cabbie says as he is ushered off to the cashier.

There is no question that some drivers commit outrageous offenses and deserve severe punishment. Mohammed Islam, whom Mazer sees later that same afternoon, is found guilty of locking a young woman in his cab and then slapping her while yelling "I need more money!" But, according to several former judges, basic principles of law are routinely violated in the name of expediency and higher revenues. "If an attorney were there representing these drivers, a significant number would be dismissed on due process," says Weinberg, who now sometimes represents drivers at the hearings. "If the inspector doesn't show up, for example, a judge will say, 'We don't really need him. You'll waive his being here, right?' And the driver will say okay." Legally the case should be either dismissed or adjourned.

Weinberg claims that judges are pressured to play the game by their chief judge. "The judges are basically instructed not to interfere with revenue enhancement," he says. "You won't find a memo to that effect. They'll say, 'Oh, your revenue is down four or five percent,' and you get the message."

If you don't, say two other ex-judges who asked to remain anonymous, you start finding yourself out of the loop. Cases are supposed to be assigned by random rotation—to whoever is free at the time. But both judges insist that cases have instead been "judge shopped" to ensure convictions. "What happened was they got a bunch of people who became rubber stamps," says one of the former judges. "Early on, the commission was requesting that we not accept certain defenses. I would argue there was no legal basis to do that, and was told off the record that 'you're deemed too liberal, so you're not going to see certain types of cases.' We all knew what was going on. I was getting less and less to do. There were days when they'd just pile up inquests in front of me—just paperwork." The judges say that they quit rather than

buck a system they were involved with only part-time anyway.

None of these charges sits well with Del Valle, who categorically denies any agency interference. "What a judge is evaluated on is his rationale for doing what he does," he says. "Any [TLC judge] who thinks his job is to make money for the city is, to say the least, unethical."

TLC officials, unfortunately, have a spotty history on the ethics score. Since 1992 twenty-nine emissions inspectors and supervisors have pleaded guilty to taking bribes. In 1987 the longtime TLC chairman Jay Turoff was convicted of fraud, stemming in part from his "gift" of twenty-three medallions to a friend and taxi-fleet owner.

MANY contend that the weakest links are really the taxi inspectors, who are under far more pressure than judges to keep the revenues flowing in. Badly paid and little respected, inspectors come and go quickly. "One of the things I found is that the officers lie," says one of the former judges. "They're graded on the number of tickets they write rather than the quality. The same officers would appear before me with the same story every time."

One favorite scam, according to nearly everyone interviewed for this article, is the dirty-cab summons—a \$25 fine that seems to get issued whenever an inspector is irritable or hasn't found anything else to ticket. Since it doesn't require a driver's presence at a hearing and there is little possibility of refuting the inspector's testimony, few cabbies will forgo hours of work to fight such a ticket. But nuisance fines add up. One cabbie advocate estimates that each medallion gets \$1,000 to \$1,500 worth of dirty-cab tickets each year.

Tensions often run high between drivers and inspectors, who are typically unskilled in cultural nuances and whom drivers call abusive and autocratic. One Pakistani driver, Wazhar Pawan, recalls that after hours in line at a TLC inspection station—watching employees take a break every hour when the coffee cart came by—he asked why things were taking so long. "It's definitely better than in your country," the inspector snapped at him, he says.

Pawan claims that he has also been set
(Continued on page 42)

*New York isn't the
only city with an immi-
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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND LAURA JACOBS

THE RAREFIED AND RAW BILLY THE KID

Agnes de Mille's tomboy *Rodeo* leaves audiences smiling into a frontier sunset, but a truer look at the history of the American West may be Eugene Loring's *Billy the Kid*. Premiered by Ballet Caravan in 1938, boasting music by Aaron Copland and a scenario by Lincoln Kirstein, *Billy* is Loring's masterpiece, and his estate keeps a tight rein on it—choreographers Patrice Whiteside and Howard Sayette are the only two in the world allowed to stage



Billy the Kid

Billy. But then, this ballet is no cartoon shoot-'em-up: it covers a stark psychological terrain, a vast and scary open space. In his black-and-white chaps, big hat, and cute boots (one of the all-time great ballet costumes), Billy is a cowboy Beau Brummel; yet his ritual response to each killing is a gesture of stripped-down psychic nausea, a cosmic retching. May 14–22 the Colorado Ballet presents *Billy the Kid* at Denver's Auditorium Theatre (303-837-8888). —L.J.

REVIVING THE SUN KING'S PLAYERS

Corneille, Racine, Molière... nearly three centuries after the death of Louis XIV, the sun has not set on the star playwrights of his reign, yet the glories of the contemporaneous French lyric stage have lain forgotten. Thanks chiefly to the excavations of the American musicologist William Christie and his superlative original-instruments ensemble Les Arts Florissants, the likes of Rameau, Charpentier, and Lully are coming back to light. As musicians, Christie's players imbue scholarly punctilio with fiery immediacy. As actors, they embroider with abandon—inevitably, since Sun King spectacles are beyond twentieth-century means. The theatrical results can be transcendent. This month the Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Les Arts Florissants in Charpentier's long-lost revenge tragedy *Médée*. Audiences that saw Lully's equally obscure *Atys* a few seasons back will know what to hope for: drama as dazzling and profound as it is *faux*, outwardly a perfect icon of postmodernism, yet white-hot at the heart. (May 19–22. For tickets call 212-307-4100.) —A.B.

BRINGING UP BALLET'S BABIES

In her early days Wendy Whelan was an old New York City Ballet type: the rangy, gawky girl with miles of stretch. After a couple of seasons she had developed into a finer type: the prize whippet, all nerve and sinew, perhaps a little gray, but perfect for a warrior role like Hippolyta. In the past three seasons, more metamorphosis: the gosling has become a Swan Queen (in *Swan Lake*), an opium dream (in *Nutcracker's* Coffee), a poltergeist (in *Union Jack*), and a Marschallin (in *Liebeslieder Walzer*). The point is, Whelan is now her own true, surprising self: exacting, lush, and lunging. See her this spring at NYCB, when the company offers classic repertory (April 28–June 26),

along with a six-performance program called The Diamond Project—new ballets by eleven choreographers (May 18, 19, 21, 26, and 31, and June 3).

Over at the Met the American Ballet Theatre boasts its own crop of beauties, star among them Paloma Herrera, the dewy, dark-haired corps girl who joined ABT in 1991 and stole the '93 spring season. She's got the radiant face of Margot Fonteyn, but where Fonteyn's sublime simplicity was born of decorum, Herrera's is the *noblesse oblige* of power. With her rounded muscles and Gibson Girl plushness, she seems to float above effort. Herrera is slated to

dance Clara in this spring's *Nutcracker*, but watch ABT casting (April 25–June 4): she'll be storming the repertory. —L.J.



Paloma Herrera



BEFORE BABEL

Great theater can communicate across any language barrier: true or false? Many visionary impresarios say true. The International Theatre Festival of Chicago, now in its fifth season, lives up to its name without polyglot excess—of ten shows, five are in regional variants of English. A major coup: the original production of *Communicating Doors*, written and directed by Alan Ayckbourn and as yet unseen



Camel Gossip III

outside Scarborough, England, Ayckbourn's home town. From Dublin comes the Gate Theatre's staging of Sean O'Casey's classic of the local working class, *Juno and the Paycock*; from Canada the dreamlike meditation *Needles and Opium*, starring its director-playwright Robert Lepage; from San Francisco the solo performer Marga Gomez, billed as "pretty, witty, and gay," in two full-evening monologues. Troupes from Mexico City and Athens cater to exotic tastes with two plays each. Of special promise, *The Persians*—that extraordinary, conscience-

stricken lament for the Greeks' mighty, beaten enemy—is spoken in the authentic ancient idiom of Aeschylus. Simultaneous translation is available for the Spanish and the Greek, but not for *Camel Gossip III*. Created by the Dutch ensemble Dogtroep, this site-specific "hand-made ritual" is reassuringly advertised as being in "no language." (May 24–June 19. For schedule and tickets call 800-370-FEST.) —A.B.



Member of Dogtroep

Austin Baer is a New York-based writer. Laura Jacobs is editor in chief of Stagebill.

JACK MITCHELL

MIRA

PAOLO RAPALINO

PAOLO RAPALINO

Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

BHAJI AND THE BEATLES

Two feature-film debuts by young British directors make up in nerve and vitality what they lack in sophistication. Timed to coincide with the latest wave of Beatlemania comes Iain Softley's film about the group's formative period in the '60s Hamburg underground. *Backbeat* works well as a high-octane period piece, a brash film about a brash time, but stumbles with its poorly scripted, overwrought account of the tortured love triangle of John Lennon (Ian Hart), fifth Beatle Stuart Sutcliffe (Stephen Dorff), and Astrid Kirchherr (Sheryl Lee), the photographer who gave the group their Beatlecuts and lots more. Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach*, which will have its theatrical debut in New York at MOMA's New Directors Festival before going into wider release, is a similarly underpolished but infectiously bumptious comedy. The film depicts two quarreling

THIRTY-TWO GOULDBERG VARIATIONS



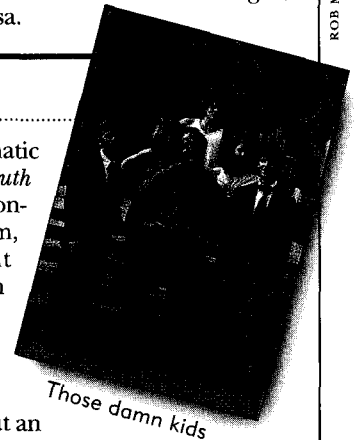
Feore playing Glenn Gould

You don't have to like Bach or Glenn Gould to love *Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould*, an entrancing new film about the renowned Canadian pianist, who died of a stroke in 1982 at age fifty. In addition to being a genius, Gould was a grade-A

eccentric and a perfectionist who gave up public performance at the height of a glittering career to devote himself to recording, writing, and nursing his hypochondria. The French-Canadian director François Girard has made a tender, funny, and wistful quasi-documentary about Gould (played by the Canadian actor Colm Feore, a dead ringer). Formally playful without being pretentious, the film replicates the structure of Gould's famous reading of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* in short takes that fan out into a fluid theme with variations on the musician's mercurial, endlessly creative temperament. Without deifying the pianist or paring him down to a nutty composer, Girard shows how Gould's neurosis fed his gift, and vice versa.

CAMPUS CAMERA

Can Hollywood be awakening to the infinite dramatic possibilities of the academy? Alek Keshishian (*Truth or Dare*), already overqualified in the field of Madonna studies, seeks to improve his grades with his new film, *With Honors*, a drama in which a scholarship student (Brendan Fraser) gets Life 101 from a homeless man (Joe Pesci) who's camping out in the basement of Harvard's Widener Library. Lest you should run away with the notion that college life is all higher learning, *PCU*, directed by actor Hart Bochner and starring hordes of little-known bratpackers, offers a comedy about an entering freshman who is caught between freewheeling fratboys and the oppressive forces of political correctness on a visit to his college-to-be. When it comes to PC, I'd rather take my chances with John Waters (*Polyester*, *Hairspray*), whose new film takes a delirious crack at all manner of pet pieties. In *Serial Mom*, Kathleen Turner plays a chipper suburban matron who goes around murdering people who won't recycle, rewind, or use their seat belts. Quite right; they had it coming.



Those damn kids

REAL LIFE WITH ERIC ROHMER

In the films of Eric Rohmer (*My Night With Maud*) nothing happens or everything happens, depending on what you consider significant and whether mood counts as plot. In his new film, *A Tale of Winter*, a young hairdresser (Charlotte Véry) juggles two boyfriends, a serious librarian and her down-to-earth boss, because she's living inside the memory of a summer romance that left her with a



Véry in *A Tale of Winter*

small daughter. Grand illusions and everyday practicality swirl around together as Félicie manipulates the hell out of her devoted swains while trying to decide what she wants. In the end fate intervenes—or is it chance? or is it choice? Rohmer won't tell you which, because it's the wrong question. The answer lies in the process, the intricately observed ebb and flow of talk and tiny but crucial emotional shifts.

Dorff as fifth Beatle Stuart Sutcliffe

generations of Indo-English women on a day trip to the seaside, presided over by a harassed feminist community organizer. Things come to a head when the young ones—a single mother who has left her abusive husband, an A student whose impregnation by her black boyfriend threatens to blow her chances of going to medical school, and two giggly teenagers—find themselves stranded between a confusing, often hostile white culture and the disapproval of their traditional elders. The film's zany irreverence allows it to creep up on us with some straight talk about race, gender, and spouse abuse in a brave new England. Any film with a musical score that includes Cliff Richard's "Summer Holiday" sung in Punjabi gets my vote.

Ella Taylor is a film columnist for *Mirabella*.

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Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

GILLESPIE'S LATIN HEIRS

Dizzy Gillespie was a tireless proselytizer for the synthesis of jazz and Afro-Latin musics, and a keen-eyed mentor to precocious musical talent. His twin passions are currently being vindicated by pianist Danilo Pérez and saxophonist David Sanchez, musicians in their twenties who played in Gillespie's last United Nation Orchestra and continue their collaboration on two vibrant new albums.



Danilo Pérez

The Journey (Novus/RCA), Pérez's second recording, is a suite about the birth of Afro-Cuban jazz—the importation of slaves to Cuba and the subsequent blending of African and Spanish cultures; the more recent struggle of Pérez's native Panama, which lends the album its distinct folkloric elements; and the images of freedom that emerged when Gillespie and others created music out of these diverse sources. The composer makes his point with majestic, often volatile themes that set his drum, bass, piano trio against the saxophones of Sanchez and George Garzone, plus an array of percussionists who employ a wide range of instruments—Cuban bata drums and the Panamanian repicador and Caja del Darien. This is strong, affirmative music that creates its own jazz-Latin fusion and gives no quarter.

The same can be said for *The Departure* (Columbia), although it places Sanchez's soprano and tenor saxes in a more familiar jazz setting. Still, the originals that Sanchez and Pérez contribute to the program, and the arrangements of Gillespie's "Woody 'n' You" and the Latin standard "Cara de Payaso," manage to nod to both traditions while adding new harmonic and rhythmic wrinkles. Sanchez, from Puerto Rico, blows with strength, intelligence, and heart, inspiring Pérez, guest trumpeter Tom Harrell, and even himself in three overdubbed interludes.

—B.B.



David Sanchez

PROVING THE DRUMMER MAKES THE BAND

One of the ironclad rules of thumb in rock-and-roll goes like this: A good band with a great drummer is a great band; a good band with a bad drummer is a bad band. Max Weinberg, formerly the drummer for Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band and currently the music director for *Late Night With Conan O'Brien*, is the author of an illuminating book on drumming in popular music (*The Big Beat*, Contemporary Books, 1984) and has now issued a three-volume anthology of

many of the most thrilling moments in rock percussion—*Max Weinberg Presents: Let There Be Drums, Vols. I–III* (Rhino). Although some great drummers are absent, owing to licensing restrictions (no Keith Moon, no John Bonham), this is just about the most fun you can have with an anthology. Weinberg's liner notes point out his favorite moments on each cut in layman's terms; they will help fans understand how the rhythm section creates drama to enhance lyrics as well as groove for danceability. Jerry Edmonton's drum fill at the end of the guitar break in Steppenwolf's "Born To Be Wild" (*Vol. II: The 60s*) can still take your breath away twenty-six years after it was recorded. "Topsy II," by Cozy Cole & His Orchestra (*Vol. I: The 50s*), combines Big Band swing with the raw aggression of rock-and-roll, making the transition between musical eras with astonishing power. Next time you're tempted to take Prozac, take *Let There Be Drums* instead.

—C.M.Y.



A DYNAMIC DUO

From Timbuktu, Ali Farka Toure is probably Africa's best-known guitarist in the West. Playing in musical forms that prefigure the blues, he is often compared to John Lee Hooker for his ability to establish hypnotic grooves and maintain them over long



Toure and Cooder in concert

periods of time. On his latest album, *Talking Timbuktu* (Hannibal), Toure teams up with Ry Cooder, America's foremost ethnomusicologist of the guitar. Specializing in forms that have grown in isolation or semi-isolation from traditional Western music, Cooder has developed a unique style incorporating exquisite tone, faultless rhythm, and a simplicity that quickly transforms the strange to the accessible. Toure and Cooder make a terrific duo. Backed by Toure's band, Groupe Asko, with appearances by fusion bass hero John Patitucci and bluesman Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, their sound falls decidedly on the mellow side. Toure specializes in the acoustic guitar, so there is none of the roaring distortion that drives American hard rock. This is music more for contemplation than for partying. Watch for Toure's tour, especially the few dates he'll be playing with Cooder.

—C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe and CD Review.

Charles M. Young is a New York-based writer.

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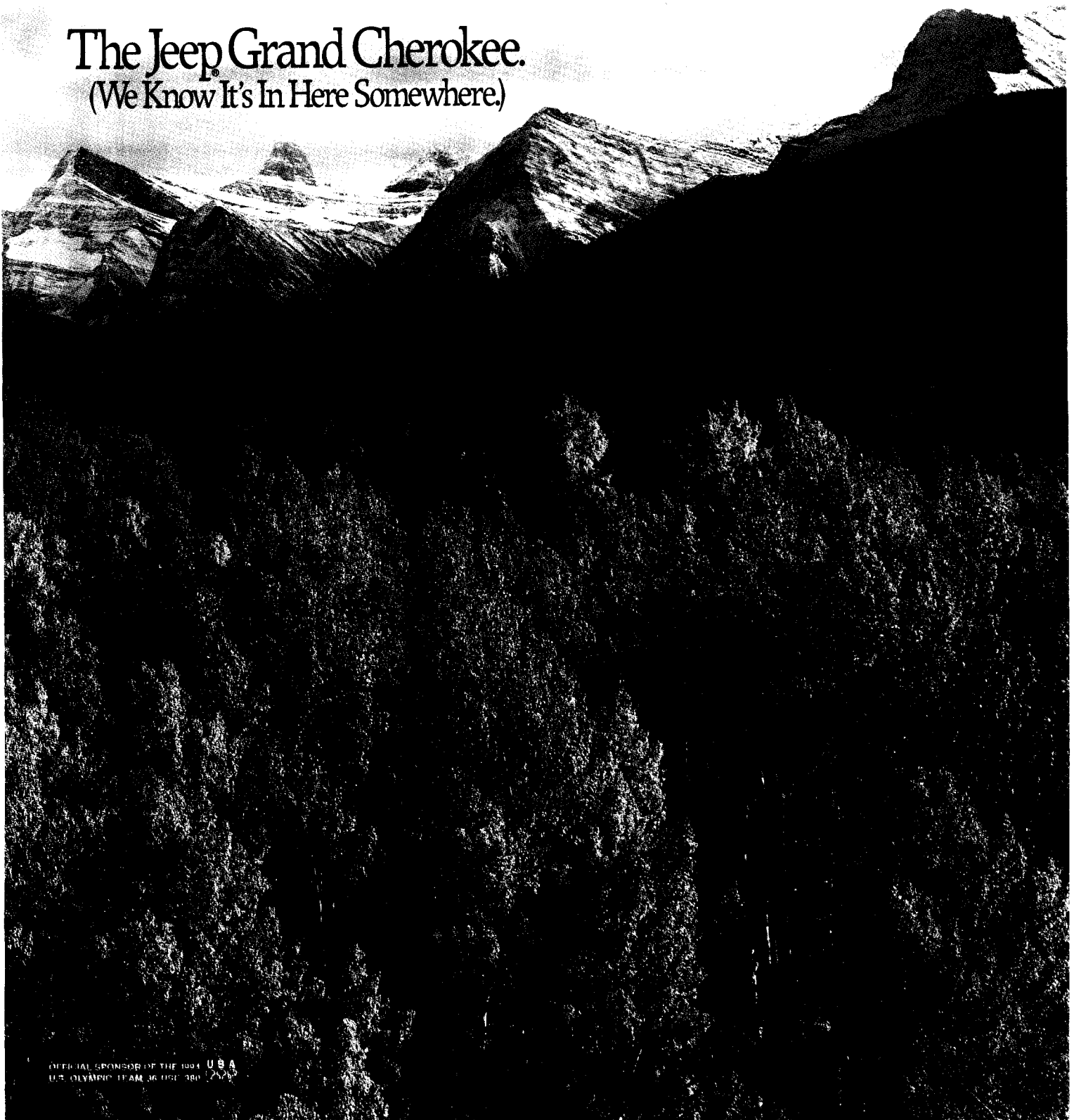
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For all its rhetoric about rules and policing, the Taxi and Limousine Commission doesn't require driving classes, or even a driving test.

(Continued from page 34)

up by overzealous summons writers. "There's a law saying the back seat has to be hooked up to these small hinges," he says. "When the inspectors come in, instead of inspecting properly, they pull the seat up. Naturally, if they pull the seat up with force, it comes out. Then they give you a ticket."

Not all the injustices are so deliberate. Suppose a cabbie doesn't see a woman on the sidewalk waving at him, and she is convinced that he intentionally ignored her. When passengers decide to file a complaint, TLC judges usually deem them more credible than the drivers, "because there's no motivation for passengers to lie," according to Susan Feinstein, a spokesperson for the commission. So the cabbie pays a \$200 to \$350 fine and is one third of the way to a mandatory suspension.

Credibility is a serious bugaboo for the drivers. Fear, language problems, and cultural tics can make their stories sound crazy even when they're true. But once a case is decided, there is virtually no reversing it, unless some procedural error occurred. Joseph Scifo Jr., a non-degreed advocate certified to represent cabbies at TLC hearings, is still exasperated with a recent verdict in favor of a passenger he caught in seven or eight significant lies. The judges have to instruct drivers in how to file an appeal, he says, "but one hundred percent of the time, when an ap-

peal is over a credibility finding, the answer comes back that the judge who did the hearing is the best person to assess credibility."

Passengers are given every advantage at the TLC. After all, one of the agency's charges is to protect them. They can adjourn a hearing for almost any reason; drivers need an exceptional excuse and documentation to do the same. If a driver just misses his hearing—even if the passenger doesn't appear either—he'll get slapped with a \$75 no-show penalty. "I had a client six months ago who missed a hearing," Scifo says. "He comes in and explains that he couldn't have committed the offense because he was out of the country when it happened, and he had the stamp on his passport to prove it. But the judge says that since he didn't have a good reason for not showing up for the hearing, he's not even considering his defense." It's a losing proposition for cabbies: whether a driver misses work to attend a hearing or pays the no-show penalty, a false charge is going to cost him.

Still, the policy that perhaps galls drivers the most is the one that allows two tickets to be written in two separate jurisdictions for one offense. That is, city cops can write both a traffic ticket and a TLC complaint for any moving violation. And it's not unheard of for a driver to lose at a TLC hearing after winning in traffic court.

PREDICTABLY, the whole city pays for the squeeze on drivers' wallets. Let a potential fare raise his hand, and two cabs dart across three lanes of traffic while another makes a death-defying U-turn. Taxis routinely fly through red lights, cut off other cars, stop short in front of buses and trucks, and make surprise turns from the wrong lane.

Some argue that it has always been this way. The evidence, however, suggests otherwise. Whereas the TLC logged about 600 passenger complaints for bad driving in 1985, the number jumped to more than 1,600 in 1992, to make bad driving far and away the most common complaint. Reported accidents involving taxis and liveries have also climbed—by 75 percent from 1977 to 1992 (although the huge growth of livery service in that time muddies the statistics).

Drivers now face far more competition from radio cars and are on the road for

much longer hours. Many complain that they are bleary-eyed for half their shift. "You start to get ready to stop for mailboxes, thinking they're portly people standing on the corner," says Allen Stevens, the taxi-school teacher, only half joking. Drivers burn out very fast these days: in 1991 a quarter of all drivers gave up after their first year, as did a fifth after their second year, and another fifth after their third. That's bad news for passengers, since driver violations drop sharply with each year of experience.

But for all its rhetoric about rules and policing, the TLC doesn't require driving classes, or even a driving test. If cabbies can get valid New York licenses, that's good enough to allow them to transport 200 million people a year around the city. The trouble is that until 1989 the state didn't require a road test for drivers with licenses from almost any other country. Many cabbies now picking up fares have never been road certified by anyone in the United States.

There's a certain cynicism behind this ease of entry, since drivers who don't last will have already paid a hefty price to the city. To those who left friends and family only to scrape by in an apartment with four other cabbies, the TLC's cheery promotional material can seem like an ugly practical joke. "I came to the United States for a better life," says Ahmad Jameel, a former civil engineer who left a wife and infant son in Egypt until he could afford to bring them over. Two years later he's still sharing an apartment with an Egyptian history teacher who drives the night shift. "With a job like cabdriver, I can't get my family," he says. "It's very bad how the cabdriver treat each other; they cut off each other for a fare. I go home very tired, nervous from work."

Three of Jameel's friends were robbed recently, and he's starting to feel edgy in his car. On top of that he recently faced a TLC hearing about an administrative oversight—his garage hadn't put his name on the rate card—that cost him \$100 and the proceeds from several hours of work. The whole grind is beginning to wear down his resolve. "People treat cabdriver like a slave, and they all think driver make mistake to collect more money," he says. Like many of his colleagues, Jameel is close to packing it in. Each week the city's three taxi schools graduate plenty of replacements. ☛

the tree was
like his family journal.

His great-great grandfather
or so the story went,
planted it.

His mother played in it.
And now his daughter was
about to get married
under it.

As a child he'd wondered
if the tree itself
held them together. But
he knew now it
was some-
thing far
greater than
that.

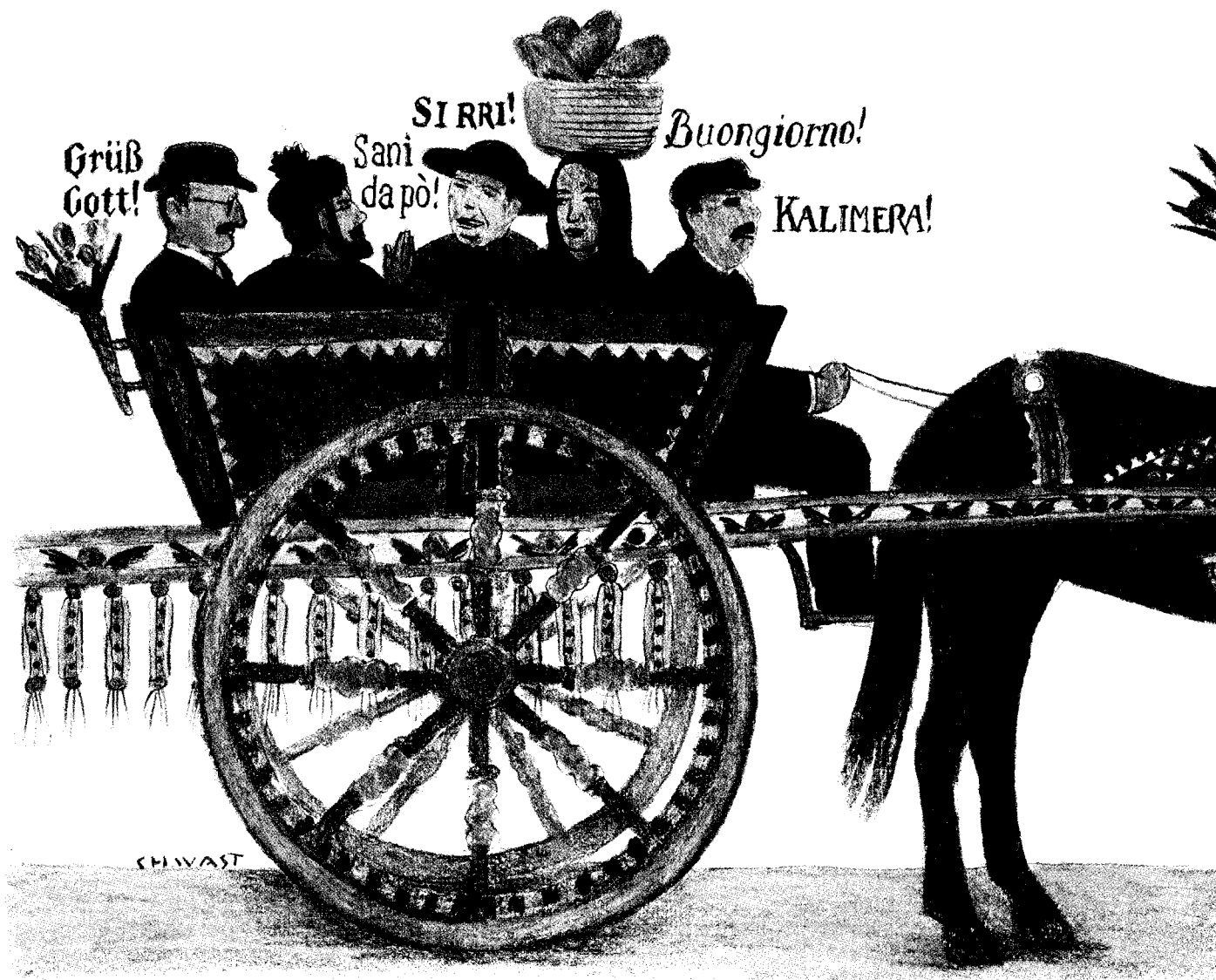
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Babel all'Italiana

Italy's thirteen cultural and linguistic minorities are agitating for change—less the political sort that cleaves the country's eastern neighbors than the right to use their own languages when and how they please

ITALY is one Western country in which current political upheavals have masked not only the rise but also the peculiar nature of ethnic sentiment. To foreigners, Italians appear to be ethnically homogeneous, especially compared with their neighbors to the east. Many Italians, too, assume that

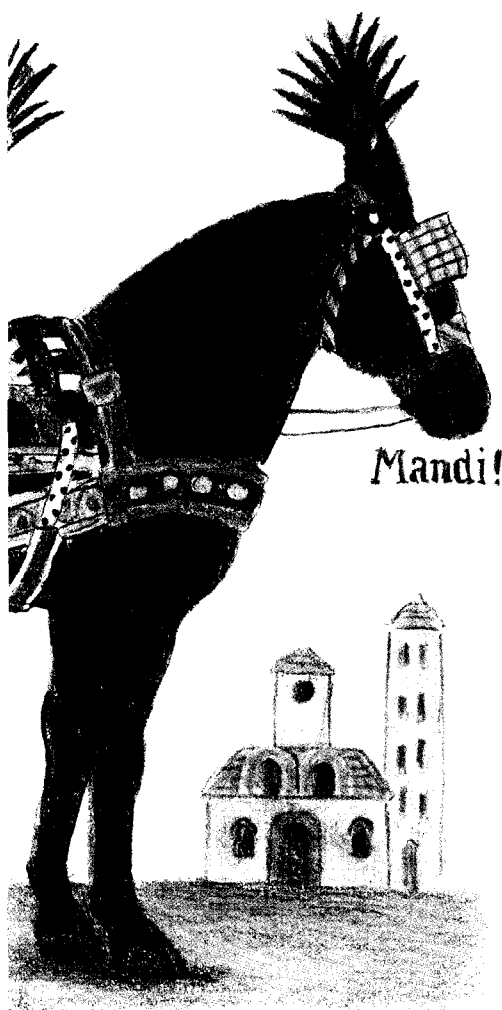
by Patricia Corbett

any diversity was absorbed long ago. "Our ancestors," the political commentator Enzo Biagi explained recently, "had too many opportunities for recreation." But in fact Italy is the Western European country with the greatest number—thirteen—of cultural and linguistic minorities: Albanian, Catalan,

Franco-Provençal, French, Friulian, German, Greek, Ladino, Occitanian, Romy, Sardinian, Croat, and Slovenian. France comes in a distant second, with nine ethnolinguistic minorities.

These are not migrant guest-workers but "historical minorities," who for centuries have been living in what is today Italian territory. Most inhabit regions where frequently shifting frontiers made nationality an arbitrary, short-term proposition. Some descend from foreign mercenaries recruited abroad to fight for the rulers of Italian statelets, others from refugees displaced by war or religious persecution in neighboring countries. The panic of Mediterranean peoples fleeing Ottoman marauders echoes 500 years later in the jokey Italian exclamation of fright or surprise "*Mamma, li turchi!*" ("Hey, Ma, the Turks are coming!").

Most Italians may be unaware that together these diverse communities ac-



count for more than five percent of their country's population of 57 million. Exact figures are hard to come by, because the census does not generally record citizens' ethnic backgrounds. Much evidence of Italy's minorities was destroyed under fascism. In the early 1920s, when the regime abolished diversity, "un-Italian"-sounding names of people and places were forcibly "reduced" to Italianate forms. Overnight Steins and Kovalcics became Pietris and Cavallis; skiers no longer vacationed in Courmayeur—or, in Franco-Provençal, Corméyaou—but in Cormaiore. Although a vigorous movement to restore original toponymy has arisen in some regions, countless surnames have vanished for good.

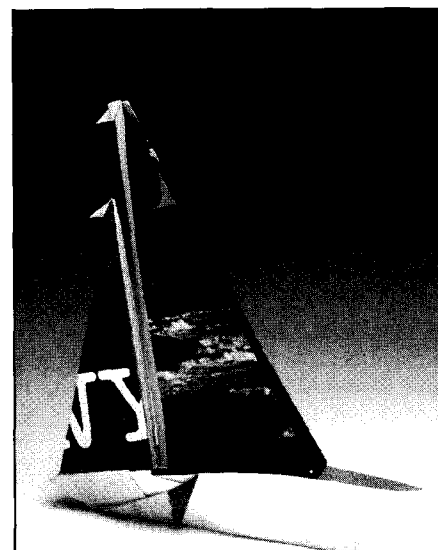
To fill in the blanks, linguists must glean clues from all manner of secondary sources, ranging from teachers' reports on children's speech to independent polls. The first official survey of language pat-

terns in Italy was conducted five years ago by ISTAT, the national statistics bureau. The results were stunning: for a majority (62 percent) of the population, dialects or non-Italian tongues remain the parlance of choice at home and with friends—and when angry. Those who admitted to using a foreign language exclusively were doubtless underreported at 1.9 percent. Respondents were often genuinely confused when asked whether they spoke Italian, a dialect, or "other"—which some took to mean English, or Chinese. The average Sardinian, for instance, might not know if his native idiom qualifies as a sort of insular Italian, a dialect, or a separate language. (The last response is the correct one.) Also, victims of Fascist-era discrimination were understandably reluctant to give candid answers that might one day again place them in jeopardy.

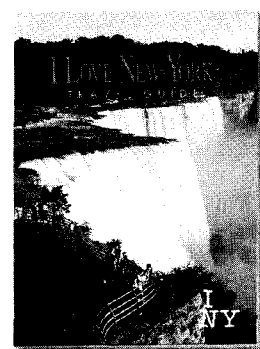
None of this should come as a surprise. When Italy was unified, in 1861, only 2.5 percent of the inhabitants could speak the national language fluently, according to the linguistic historian Tullio De Mauro; less than 10 percent could understand it at all. "Italy has been made, but not so the Italians," was the patriot Massimo d'Azeglio's gloomy remark at the time. Initially progress was slow: by the 1950s Italian-speakers made up just 19 percent of the population. Today, although 87 percent are able to express themselves in Italian, only 38 percent say they actually do so at all times.

Article 3 of Italy's 1948 constitution—a remarkably progressive document for its era—states that all citizens are equal before the law regardless of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions, and personal and social conditions. Article 6 goes one step further, specifically protecting linguistic minorities. However, for the past two decades attempt after attempt by parliamentarians of every political stripe to pass a single blanket law defining the rights of all of Italy's historical minorities has failed. In their dealings with government, ethnic delegates often encounter an unwillingness to pay more than lip service to the constitution. A high career official in the Ministry of the Interior confided to me not long ago, "I won't be forced to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on groups destined for extinction."

Ethnolinguistic groups want the government not merely to permit but also to set guidelines and guarantee support for



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ELLEN COLTON'S DINNER PARTY WAS THE opening of the season. Her first dinner this particular year was to officially introduce Maggie, though she was already known to many of the ladies who were wearing her Miss Mermaid fashions. Among the guests was Mortimer Sheldon, a leather manufacturer from Massachusetts. He was a childless widower, his wife having died five years earlier. When his eyes first lit on Maggie, his heart beat wildly; he had found the perfect mate. Her diminutive stature, rose-gold hair and delicate features represented the child he never had; her petite, shapely body—a pocket-Venus, he called her—made her a desirable companion wife.

Mortimer had little opportunity to get close to her on that first occasion as she was surrounded most of the evening by others equally eager to welcome her. He left early, his mind a whirl with plans to make her his very own.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Maggie received a huge bouquet of roses tied with a green satin ribbon. A card was pinned to the ribbon with a diamond brooch: "Please accept this as a token of my deepest admiration," she read, astonished. The card was signed "Mortimer Sheldon" and as hard as she tried she could not remember his name.

Four o'clock was the accepted time for callers and Ellen's home became the only place to be at teatime (although there were stronger libations for those who wanted them). Mortimer was the first to call that day, carrying a tremendous bouquet. When he was announced, Maggie came forward to meet him, took the flowers and asked the maid to put them in water. As she extended her hand he held it too long and kissed it greedily. Inwardly she recoiled from this unprepossessing old man. He was approaching fifty and the passing years and his unstinting devotion to business had not been kind to him. His eyes had puffy, dark bags under them, his whole being had sagged and his mouth on her hand felt loose-lipped and wet. Although he did not resemble the man in the least, a picture of Dr. Henderson flashed in Maggie's mind's eye. A few years ago, Maggie would have run from him; but now she called on her newly acquired sophistication to handle the situation.

"Mr. Sheldon," (she withdrew her hand wishing she could wipe it off) "thank you for the flowers, but I cannot accept the gift you attached to them. She reached into a pocket of her dress and held out the diamond pin.

He pushed her hand away. "My dear, this is just a token of my affection. There is much more I will give you when we get to know each other better."

"Again I thank you," Maggie said

firmly. "But believe me when I say I will not accept anything of yours except flowers if you insist without them. I prefer not to receive anything."

Mortimer, delighted by her reserve, said, "I am very wealthy, my dear, and I offer you the treasures at your feet."

Exasperated, Maggie said, "I am a widow and I have no other relatives to announce. She then turned to her handmaid and moved away to greet the next caller. She managed to dodge Mortimer's attentions for the rest of the afternoon and was satisfied that she had discouraged this insistent man.

She had not. Mortimer was a son of extreme youth and exuberant prettiness and could not resist her always with flowers and a card. He had decided, as long as it took to turn the key, to win her.

Later he caught her as she hurried to her room to receive a young law student who was as soon as Maggie but secretly by her.

"Maggie! Mortimer!" he called. "Come to the terrace. I love you. I want you for my wife. May I touch your hair?" He drew her close and pressed his lips to her face. With a wrenched out of her hand he drew her back and pressed his lips to her face. With a wrenched out of her hand he drew her back and pressed his lips to her face.

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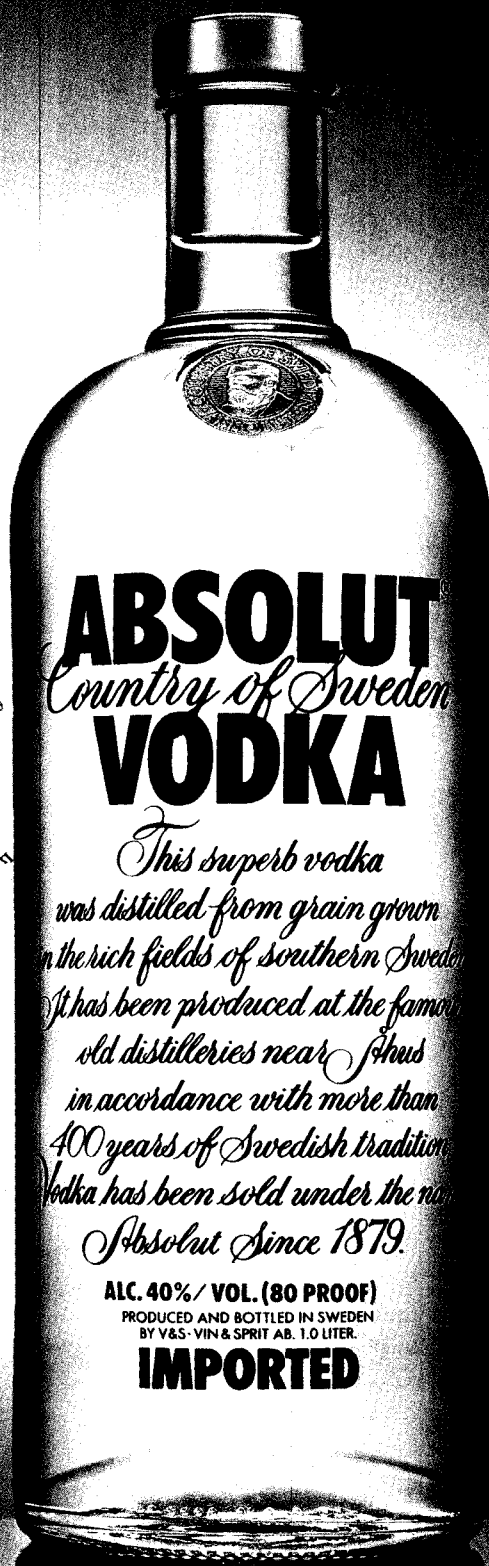
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the use of minority languages in public education, administration, and the mass media. These match the basic goals set forth in the Council of Europe's 1992 Charter for Regional or Minority Languages—which Italy has not signed. Although these requests might sound unrealistic and unpatriotic to many Americans, the situation of Europeans is quite different.

When new boundaries were drawn in the Old World, historical minorities rarely had any choice as to which state would encapsulate their communities. Sometimes they didn't even care. An old Neapolitan saying goes, "*Franza o Spagna, purchè se magna*" ("France or Spain, as long as we eat"). Italy's long history of political fragmentation has always been offset by hardy tribal groupings, from inoffensive *campanilismo* (linking those living within sight and sound of the same campanile, or bell tower) to criminal associations like the Mafia, Camorra, and N'drangheta. Italy's ancient ethno-linguistic enclaves represent a form of continuity in a constantly shifting landscape. Early this year the Ministry of the Interior issued its first official report on ethnolinguistic minorities in Italy. Although some quibble with its facts and figures, the document clearly signals that these groups are starting to be recognized as a vital national resource.

WHY should we care about the fate of these quaint anthropological pockets within the confines of Europe's third most productive country? "Italy today can tell us a lot about the concept of statehood at the end of the twentieth century," according to Richard Locke, a professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He believes that what is happening in Italy is "an extreme manifestation of a widespread European trend": a shift away from central authority and toward local interests.

As Italy's First Republic spectacularly self-destructed last year, after a stunning fifty-two postwar governments, the country was torn apart along socio-economic and regional lines. Italy's minorities are just as eager for change and just as resentful of Rome's exploitation of territorial assets as their fellow citizens—yet they view the dawning Second Republic with concern. As part of a sweeping electoral reform proportional representation

for parties garnering less than four percent of votes nationwide has been eliminated. The reform, which will give Italy a stable two- or three-party system, has already deprived the smallest ethnic groups of seats in Parliament.

Some ethnic groups complain that Italy distinguishes between first-class and second-class minorities. First-class minorities speak the national language of a neighboring country and, more significant, inhabit linguistic "peninsulas" extending into Italy over borders shared with Austria, France, and now Slovenia. Thus the German-speaking inhabitants of the South Tirol, the Francophones in the Valle d'Aosta, and the Slovenes in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia belong to an elite. They are officially recognized by the Italian state.

Although the Sardinian and Friulian minorities are both demographically and geographically conspicuous, they are in the second category, along with the eight other linguistic "islands" and "archipelagos" scattered throughout the land. There are even enclaves buried within enclaves: unassimilated Ladino and Germanic villages in French zones, a Catalan nucleus in Sardinia. Singly, not one of these groups can hope to obtain formal recognition from the government.

The special treatment the more privileged minorities enjoy stems not from the application of the constitution but from internationally brokered accords written after the Second World War—and continuing support from ethnic big brothers in neighboring countries.

The first to benefit from diplomatic intervention were the Francophones in the Valle d'Aosta (*valdostani*, who now number 70,000). Under the Savoy, French had been this region's official language from 1561 until the Kingdom of Italy was founded, three centuries later. In 1945, to defuse the very real threat of secession to France, Rome granted the Valle d'Aosta the right to administrative self-determination. Since then the region's integrated bilingualism has proved a success: school subjects are taught in both French and Italian, and citizens are free to conduct public and private business in either language.

Yet there are speakers of other Gallo-Romance tongues living in the western Alps whose rights are nonexistent: the Franco-Provençals and the Occitanians.

The former (90,000) are most numerous in the valleys of Aosta and Piedmont, although up to 2,000 live in two southern Apulian towns, Faeto and Celle San Vito. The towns were settled in 1270 by Franco-Provençal soldiers and, later, their families at the invitation of the Angevin King Charles I, who wanted to repopulate his war-ravaged lands. Franco-Provençals reject any suggestion that theirs is not a true language but a dialect.

Occitanian is the medieval troubadours' *langue d'oc*, which in 1539 was outlawed by François I in favor of the *langue d'oïl*—French—then used in Paris. Somehow the language endured, and even briefly triumphed when in 1904 the Occitanian poet Frédéric Mistral shared the Nobel Prize for Literature. Today about two million people speak it daily, and one tenth of these live in Italy, mainly in Piedmont—except for the 3,000 isolated inhabitants of Guardia Piemontese, in Calabria, in the far south.

THE path to linguistic parity in the South Tirol, or Alto Adige, as Napoleon and Mussolini preferred to call the area between the Brenner Pass and Lake Garda, has been rockier. In 1919, after almost six centuries of uninterrupted Hapsburg dominion, the South Tirol was apportioned to Italy. Twenty years later 78,000 inhabitants took Hitler up on *die Option* of resettlement in Germany, but at the end of the Second World War almost all chose to return home. By this time public opinion on both sides of the border strongly supported annexing the South Tirol to Austria. Rather than lose a sizable, prosperous chunk of territory, Italy granted the Alto Adige administrative autonomy in 1948.

In the *altoatesino* system ethnic Italians and Germans have equal but separate status. The system has spawned countless measures that can seem unfair, illogical, or just plain silly. Quotas based on "ethnic density" ensure that the German-speaking majority of 288,000 has greater access to public housing than Italians. The staggered schedules of German and Italian schools are seen as a device to prevent children from mingling. The *patentino*, a sort of German-speaking license, is an absolute requirement for holding public office. Within the South Tirol native Italian-speakers are the disadvantaged minority.

Understandably, dissatisfaction is ram-

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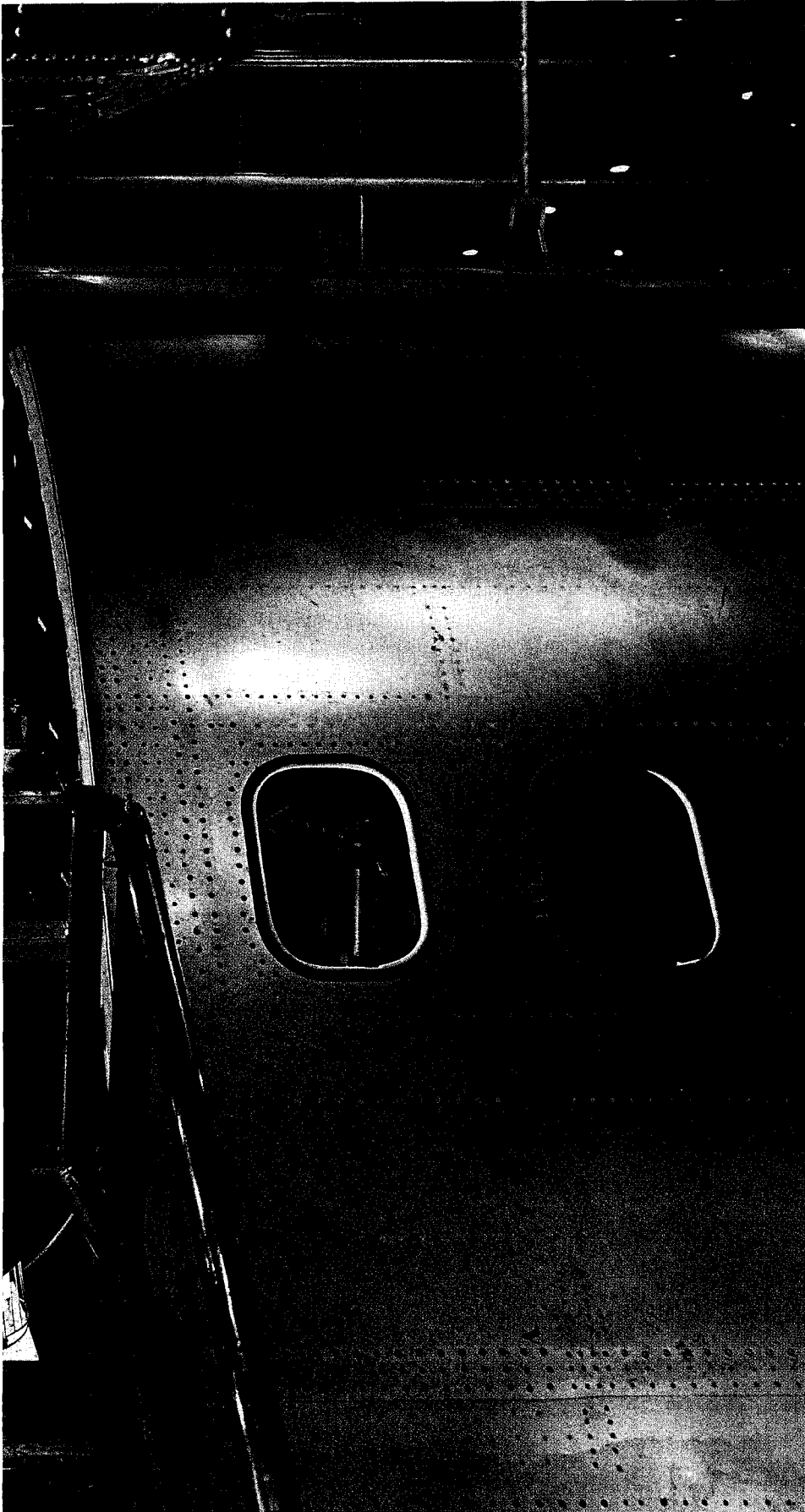
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Top: John Todd, Sheila Skillman. Bottom: T.J. Seibert, Jay Skalka.



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pant both among ethnic Italians, who feel discriminated against in their own country, and among ethnic Germans, who feel like Austrians in exile. From the sixties through the eighties terrorist attacks were carried out against targets in both Austria and Italy. After years of summitry involving the United Nations along with representatives from both states and every relevant political and ethnic group, the latest and perhaps last *pacchetto*, or package deal, was signed in 1992.

Roughly 20,000 other German-speakers scattered across northern Italy have none of the advantages accruing to their Alto Adige cousins. They are the speakers of the Corinthian-German dialect, who live around Udine; the Mòcheni ("doers," whose name is an Italianized version of the German *machen*, "to do"), who live in the Trentino; the Cimbrians (from *zimberer*, "timberers," or woodsmen), who have lived in the mountainous Seven Communes, around Vicenza, and Thirteen Communes, around Verona, since about 1200; and the Walsers, whose extended-family networks—linking, say, the Valdostan Delapierres, the Piemon-

tese Della Pietras, and the Swiss Zümsteins—are famous. Ten Walser colonies survive in Italy, each one represented by a gold star on the Walser flag.

THE northeastern reaches of the country have always been home to a large Slovene population. After the fall of the Dual Monarchy, in 1918, the area between the Julian Alps and the Istrian peninsula was allotted to Italy. In the aftermath of the Second World War, most of this territory was eventually reassigned to Yugoslavia. The Slovenes who had become "compulsory Italians" under fascism were joined in Italy by a later generation fleeing Tito's regime. As early as 1945 the treatment of Slovenes by Italian officials was condemned by the British Foreign Office. Basic linguistic rights were granted only after considerable delay, and still do not apply equally to all Slovenes. It was only in 1961 that Slovene-language schools were legally instituted by the Italian government in the provinces of Trieste and Gorizia (which together contain 64,000 Slovenes). The 21,000 Slovenes of the

province of Udine are still out in the cold.

After Slovenia and Croatia achieved statehood, in 1991, Italian Slovene complaints of unfairness suddenly gained international resonance. Both former Yugoslav republics have sizable ethnic Italian populations, and Italian authorities began to fear reprisals against their own. Now the three countries are negotiating to safeguard their respective minorities' rights. Current national frontiers have not been challenged, at least not officially. However, the closely related issue of the restitution of confiscated or abandoned property, especially real estate, is high on the Italian, Slovene, and Croatian agendas. One Slovene spokesman recently said darkly, "The Italians lose wars, but they win at the bargaining table."

The Slovenes are not Italy's only people of Balkan origin. There are at least 3,000 Croats in the southern province of Campobasso, who have preserved an archaic Croatian dialect known as *stocavo-icavo*. Many of them descend from groups who fled the Turks in the fifteenth century. Although they are not involved in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia,

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ON THE STREET

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these Italian Croats have received aid from Croatian nationalists in the not-so-distant past.

Italy's 25,000 Grecanici, or neo-Greeks, are fond of tracing their ancestry all the way back to Magna Graecia, or at the very least to Justinian's Byzantine Empire, when migrants were drawn to zones in the heel and toe of the boot where there had been previous Greek colonization. Though erratic token exchanges with Greece continued through the 1950s, when Athens had a commemorative stele erected in the main square of the unofficial neo-Greek capital Calimera, relations cooled under the Greek colonels. Recently there has been a revival of interest in *griko*, a tongue comparable to the vernacular spoken in Cyprus or Crete.

More populous than Slovenes and neo-Greeks together are the Albanians (130,000), or Arbëresh. They came to Italy in successive waves as hired-soldiers-cum-settlers. Among the earliest colonists was the scourge of the Turks, Giorgio Castriota Scanderbeg, whom Ferrante d'Aragonia invited to put down roots in Apulia with his troops; the last

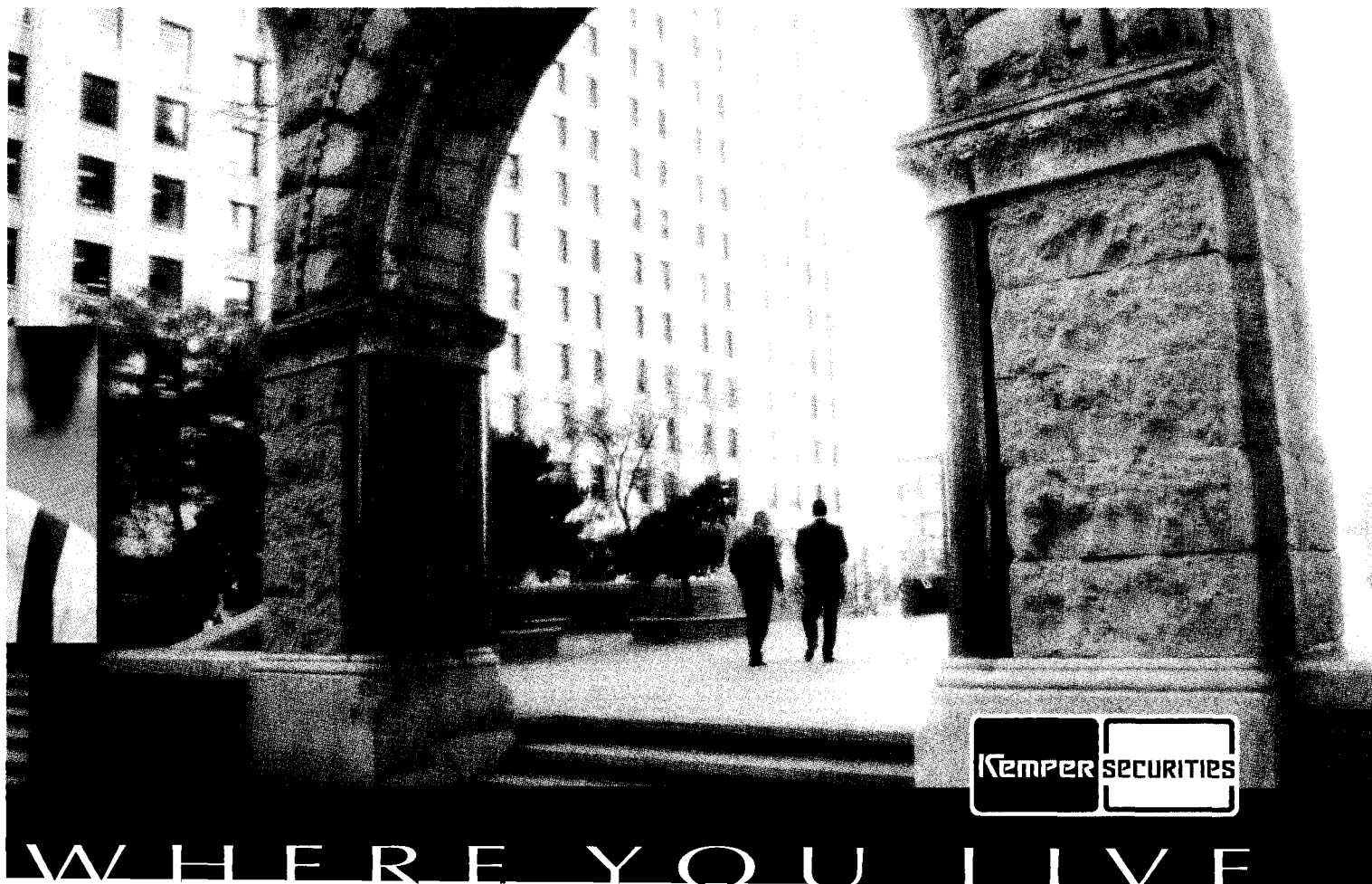
colony was founded in 1744 in Abruzzo, at the behest of the Bourbon monarch Charles III. Protective of their ancient traditions, ethnic Albanians cultivate a clanish sense of kinship. Three years ago, when Italy turned back a brimming boatload of refugees from Tirana, Arbëresh villages quickly pooled resources to take in as many families as possible. Paradoxically, the Albanians are also among the most assimilated of Italy's historical minorities, in every field. For example, the legendary director of Mediobanca, Italy's premier industrial investment bank, Enrico Cuccia, is reported to be an Arbëresh.

WHAT are sometimes called Italy's two macro-minorities—the Sardinians and the Friulians—are in fact majorities in their homelands. Though Sardinia and Friuli-Venezia Giulia are autonomously governed regions, these groups have not achieved the same recognition as Francophone *valdostani* or German-speaking *altoatesini*.

More than half of the 1.7 million Sardinians are conversant in the Sardinian language, *limba sarda*. This is not an Ital-

ian dialect but a distinct Romance tongue with a strong basis in Latin, even if Dante's crude assessment was that Sardinian is to Latin as monkeys are to men. There has always been an energetic autonomy movement in Sardinia; it persisted through four centuries of Catalanian and Aragonese dominion, which started in 1323. That dominion left a strong stamp. The invaders from the Iberian peninsula made their linguistic mark: roughly half the inhabitants of the Sardinian port of Alghero still speak *català*, or Catalan.

Separatist agitation intensified after 1720, when the Savoy took possession of Sardinia, eventually imposing Italian as the official language. Lawmakers have long campaigned, usually unsuccessfully, for linguistic rights. Only last year the Italian government quashed as unconstitutional the latest motion passed by the Sardinian Regional Council to provide limited instruction in and administrative use of the *limba*. If the measure is ever approved, argument over the relative merits of the several Sardinian variants (including *campidanese*, *logudor-*



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ese, gallurese, and sassarese) may begin.

Unlike many other minorities; the 700,000 Friulians can hark back to a golden age of independence and have been established on Italian soil for thousands of years. Established during the eleventh century, the Patria del Friuli survived with its own legal system and economy until 1420, when Venice annexed the central and western areas. Austria conquered the east a century later, and it was not until after the First World War that Friuli was reunited, within the Kingdom of Italy. The long wait for their own unification may be one reason why of all of Italy's ethnic groups, Friulians are the least inclined to separatism. It is interesting, however, to discover that a recent president of the region has recorded a bilingual message on his home answering machine—in English and *merilenghe furlan*, the Friulian mother tongue.

Furlan is related to Ladino, the Rhaeto-Romance tongue called Romansch in Switzerland, where it is sanctioned as a national, though not an official, language. Ladino in Italy is spoken by some 30,000 mountain folk in the Dolomites.

Finally, a group that lives everywhere and nowhere: the Gypsies (110,000) are the country's most overlooked minority—although new arrivals from Eastern Europe daily swell their numbers. The original migration probably dates back to 1422, when a "Duke Andrew of Egypt," accompanied by several hundred men, women, and children, descended on Bologna on his way to visit the Pope. In recent years the Gypsies have been championed by the Church. John Paul II hailed them as a "transnational people," a term the European Community proposes to adopt. Don Bruno Nicolini, the founder of Rome's Centro studi zingari (Center for Gypsy Studies), is tireless in his efforts to get authorities to attend to his flock's needs and also to foster *Romanipé*—Romanian consciousness-raising. Nicolini says that having lived for centuries as nomads, Gypsies can show the way to a future without borders, and can help Western Europeans liberate themselves from the "straitjacket" in which they have, he says, been voluntarily enclosed.

ONE of the chief charges leveled against Italy's minority languages is that a number of them are mere *parlate*, qualifying as speech but not language,

and often lacking standard written forms—"mouthfuls of air," to adapt Anthony Burgess's phrase. But linguistic validity and vitality do not depend on the strength of the written tradition over the oral. The real distinction to be made is contextual. The colloquialisms of *stocavo-icavo* spring from the *brat-a-brat*—"brotherliness"—of rural life; Franco-Provençal is best suited to the "primitive socialism" of communal Valdostan pastures. No matter how widespread its use or distinguished its literary heritage, Occitanian is naturally suited to nonurban, low-technology environments. Other languages, such as Slovenian and Albanian, whose standardization may only just have been completed or is still in progress, have instead evolved, pressed by external historical events, to reflect the full range of contemporary reality.

Because they converse among themselves and with strangers in tongues unintelligible to most Italians, minority-group members have often been suspected of disloyalty. During this century's major conflicts, when the country's "sacred natural confines" were being staked out, they were often cast as traitors. In 1947 the ethnic French, Friulian, and German signatories of the Declaration of Desenzano demanded that Italy "one and indivisible" become a federal state. Today, although the Northern League flirts with the idea of a country divided into self-supporting states, this is not overwhelmingly favored by any of Italy's ethnic groups—not even the usually rebellious South Tyroleans, 62 percent of whom have declared themselves "satisfied" with the current status. Historically, minorities have always felt able to honor both *piccola* and *grande patria* (small and great fatherland). It is simply a matter of geohistorical perspective: for the Friulians, Italy is the great fatherland and Friuli the small; for the Arbëresh, Albania is the great fatherland and Italy the small.

Ethnic Italians never held a monopoly on politics. The Risorgimento statesman Count Camillo Benso di Cavour was a French-speaking Piedmontese who was never completely comfortable in Italian; Francesco Crispi, Garibaldi's adviser, was the son of an Albanian priest. In this century the anti-fascist Minister Giovanni Giolitti was an Occitanian. A founder of the Italian Communist Party, Antonio Gramsci, was of Sardinian and Albanian

parentage; its late charismatic leader Enrico Berlinguer and the Christian Democratic former President Francesco Cossiga also hailed from Sardinia. Minority-group members have made notable contributions in the arts and humanities. The painter Zoran Music is a Slovene, the writer Mario Rigoni Stern a Cimbrian. The author and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini was a keen—and early—advocate of Friulian culture.

I recently attended a meeting in Rome of CONFEMILI, the national Confederation of Linguistic Minorities, where Ian Fleming-style acronyms were much in evidence, ranging from the ominous MAO (Movimento autonomo occitano) to the cheeky DISSIMILI (Dipartimento sardo studi identità minoranze linguistiche). The most striking feature of the encounter was the seriousness of the debate, focusing on matters of common interest: the problems besetting the passage of "our law"; the danger that "macro-minorities" will overshadow "micro-minorities"; the difficulties of making do with a fluctuating budget provided by the European Community (with no help from Italy), which won't support a headquarters and which reimburses members for expenses months late. A new poster promoting regional languages, produced in Brussels with different versions for many different languages, featured drawings of variously shaped pink tongues neatly tacked to a board, with a legend reading "*Le lingue vanno amate, non conservate. Le lingue regionali, un bene tutto tuo*" ("Tongues should be loved, not preserved. Regional languages, your very own property"). The design was dismissed as being in poor taste, and the German-speaking representative from Bolzano soberly noted that in his part of the world it was felt that the verb "loved" ought to be replaced with "used."

An outsider might be tempted to pick out the obvious stereotypes, according to superficial criteria of costume and accessories: a Gypsy painter in an electric-blue suit, a Valdostan in pinstripes and a hat, a bearded Slovene journalist with a PowerBook. Even so, the people at the conference generally looked no different from average Italians you would find walking down the street. And, of course, they were communicating not in English or Esperanto but in their national language—Italian. ☞

to the east...
the western edge of a...
umans, was called Lop Nor...
It was now the beginning of an...
had lost much of its warmth, and...
sometimes darken abruptly and wild...
would sweep across the wastes. The...
snap and a tang to them. The stars...
of light upon the quiet pools and...
dawning would find the pools shiver...
reed tops dusted with frost crystals...
would come up across Lop Nor and...
world into a shimmering glittering...
and silver—and for Numi, wholly...
and begun.

With the advancing season he...
his fellow creatures passing over...
flocks were small, but each as...
Some of them came from the la...
sun, some from across the la...
to join any of the flocks. Lik...
of the lowland. Fish were...
passages and within the...
of the lake.

Here in this new home...
other creatures besides...
he observed a reddish b...
ing along the bays and...
had a glimpse of the...

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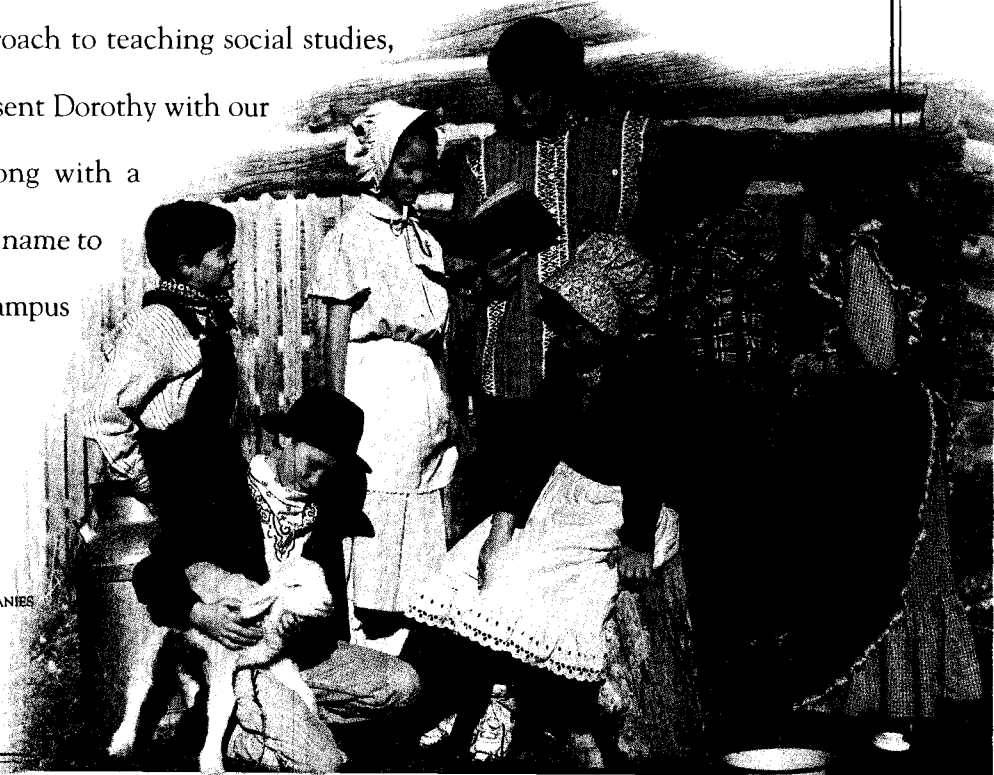
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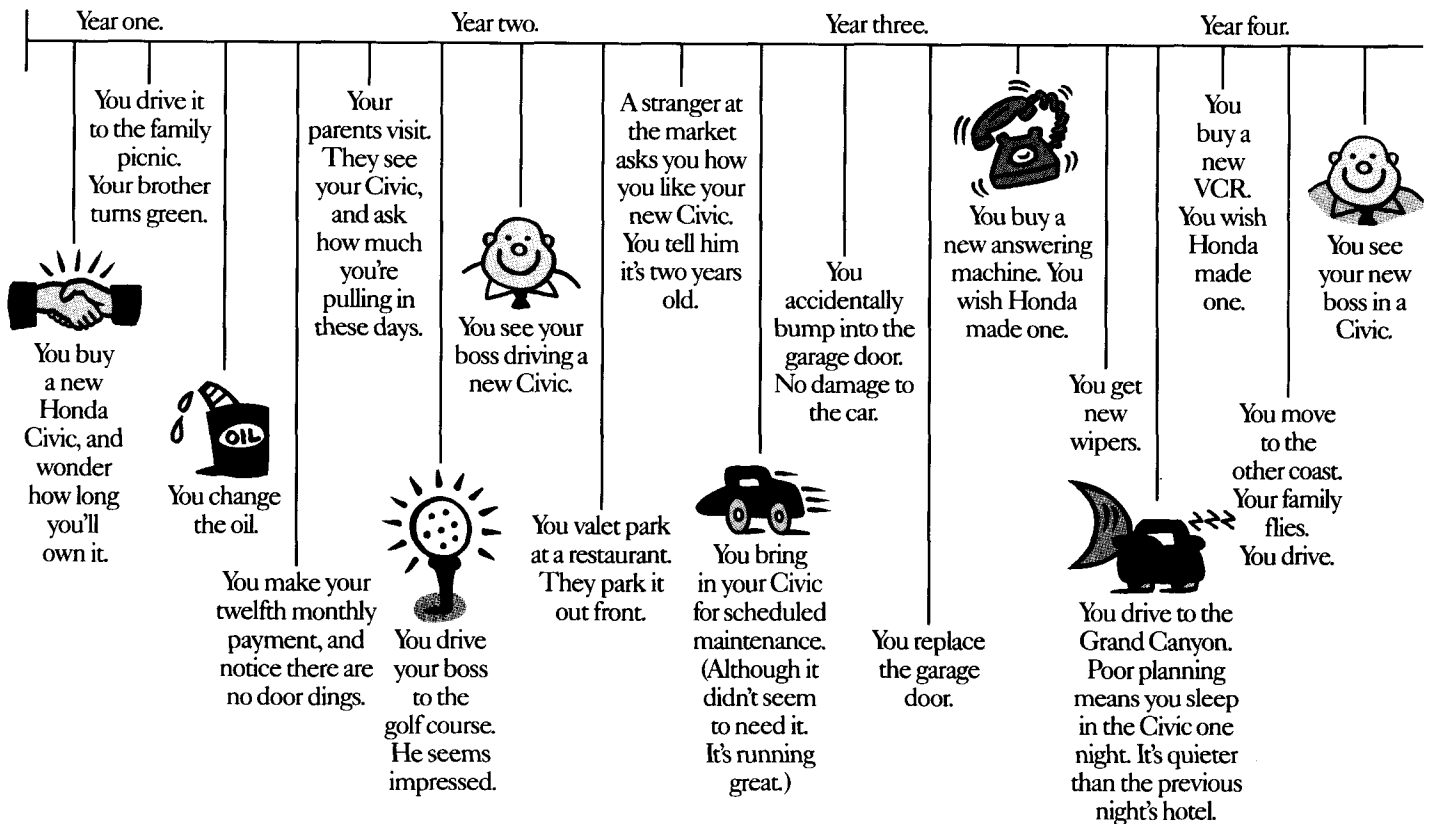
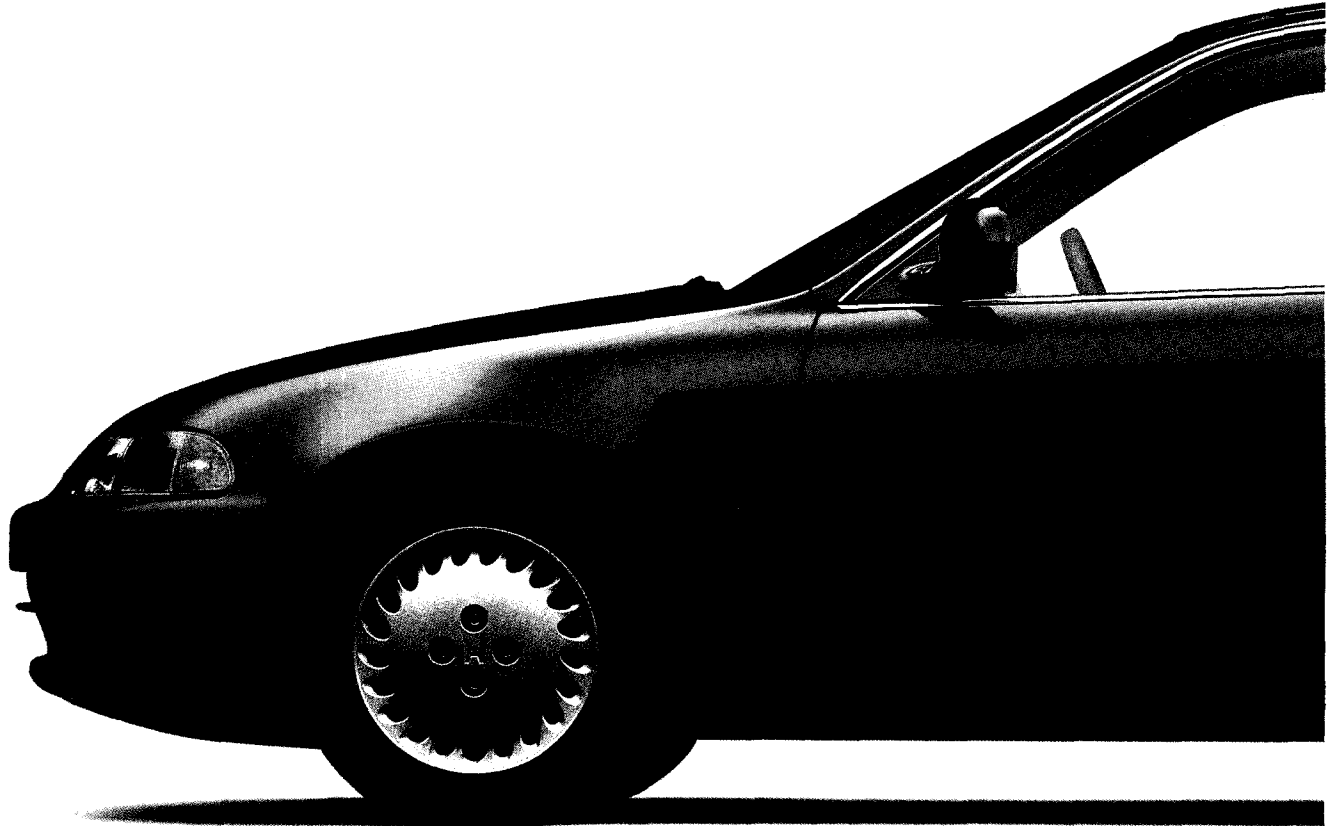


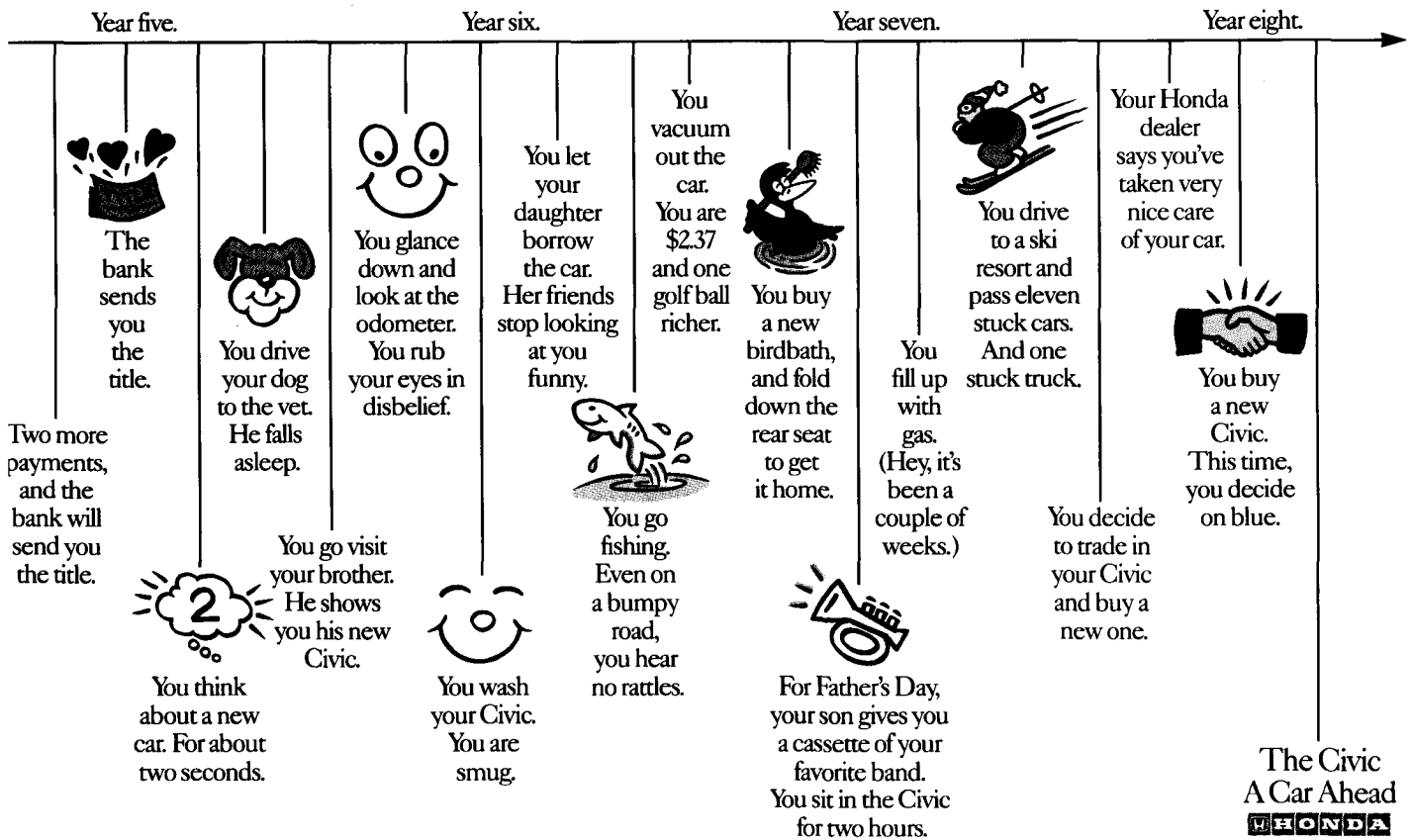
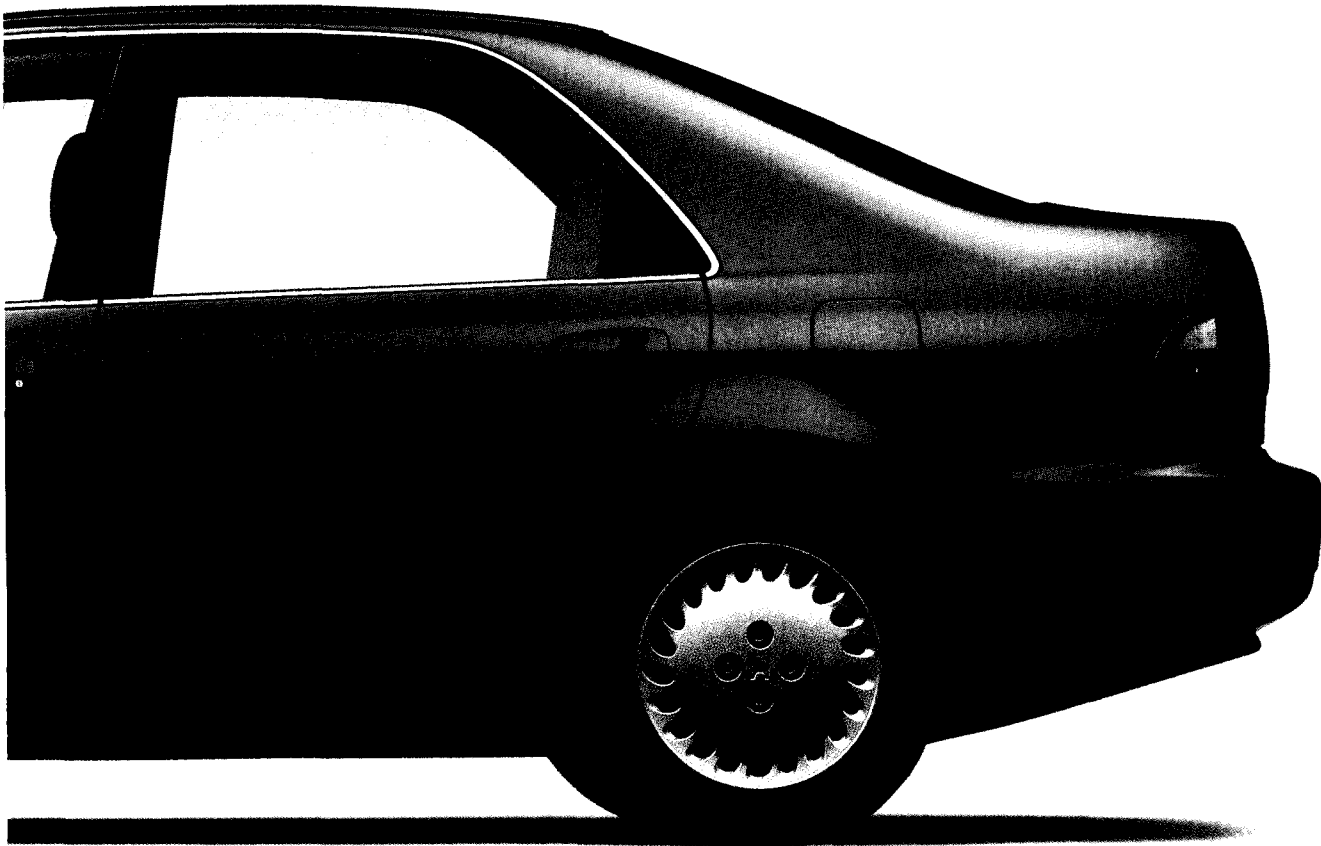
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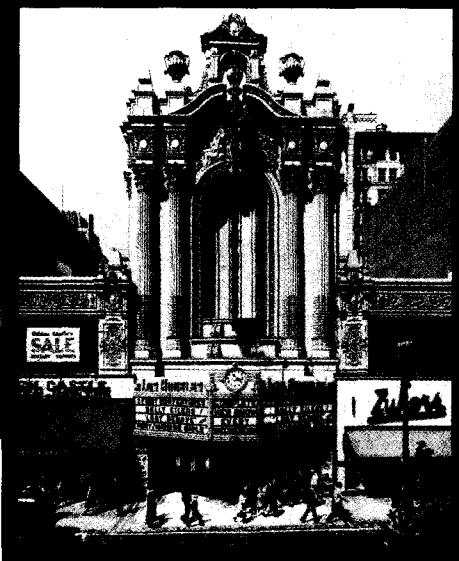
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Historic buildings, clockwise from left: the Bradbury, the Wilkerson's Art Deco lobby, the Los Angeles Theater

box the popcorn comes in. But here is the sixty-six-year-old United Artists Theater, designed on the scale and in the style of a Gothic cathedral, with carvings of cameramen, starlets,

and directors substituting for classical gargoyles on the façade, and murals featuring the movie stars of the era in fanciful roles. It was built by Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and some friends, including Charlie Chaplin, and has been impeccably restored, in order to serve as a studio for a television church. Farther up Broadway is the staggeringly ornate and innovative Los Angeles Theater, built in 1931 especially for the premiere of Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* and, for the moment, still in use. Its original features included a "crying room" for infants, a decorated, equipped "day-care center," and electronic

seat sensors that could tell the head usher in the lobby which seats were unoccupied.

There are close to a dozen old theaters on the three-hour tour, one of many such pilgrimages run by the Los Angeles Conservancy, an organization committed to discovering and preserving "historic" Los Angeles. Its chosen task is not an easy one, because Los Angeles, like many of its famous citizens, tends to be emotionally uncertain about its age. The original pueblo that became Los Angeles was built in 1781. But the most spectacular and architecturally impressive preserved structure in the city, the tenderly restored Bradbury Building (highly touted by all civic boosters, including the few who have actually visited it), is a hundred years younger. Much of what else is being preserved now has barely had time to grow a five-decade shadow.

THE Bradbury Building is an 1893 wonder of wood and cast iron and glass and light, woven together, it appears, by a lace-and-latticework web of iron railings, pillars and fittings, and exposed elevator cages and cables, all beneath an enormous skylight. Entering the

The Prime of Los Angeles

The city of the future discovers its past and gains a new appreciation for culture

RIOTS, fires, earthquakes, mud slides—Hollywood itself might have hesitated to load so many disasters onto a single city. And yet, curiously, visitors are likely to find Los Angeles more rewarding now than ever before, for beyond its day-to-day difficulties it has started to take a longer view of itself. This isn't Paris or London or Rome; in

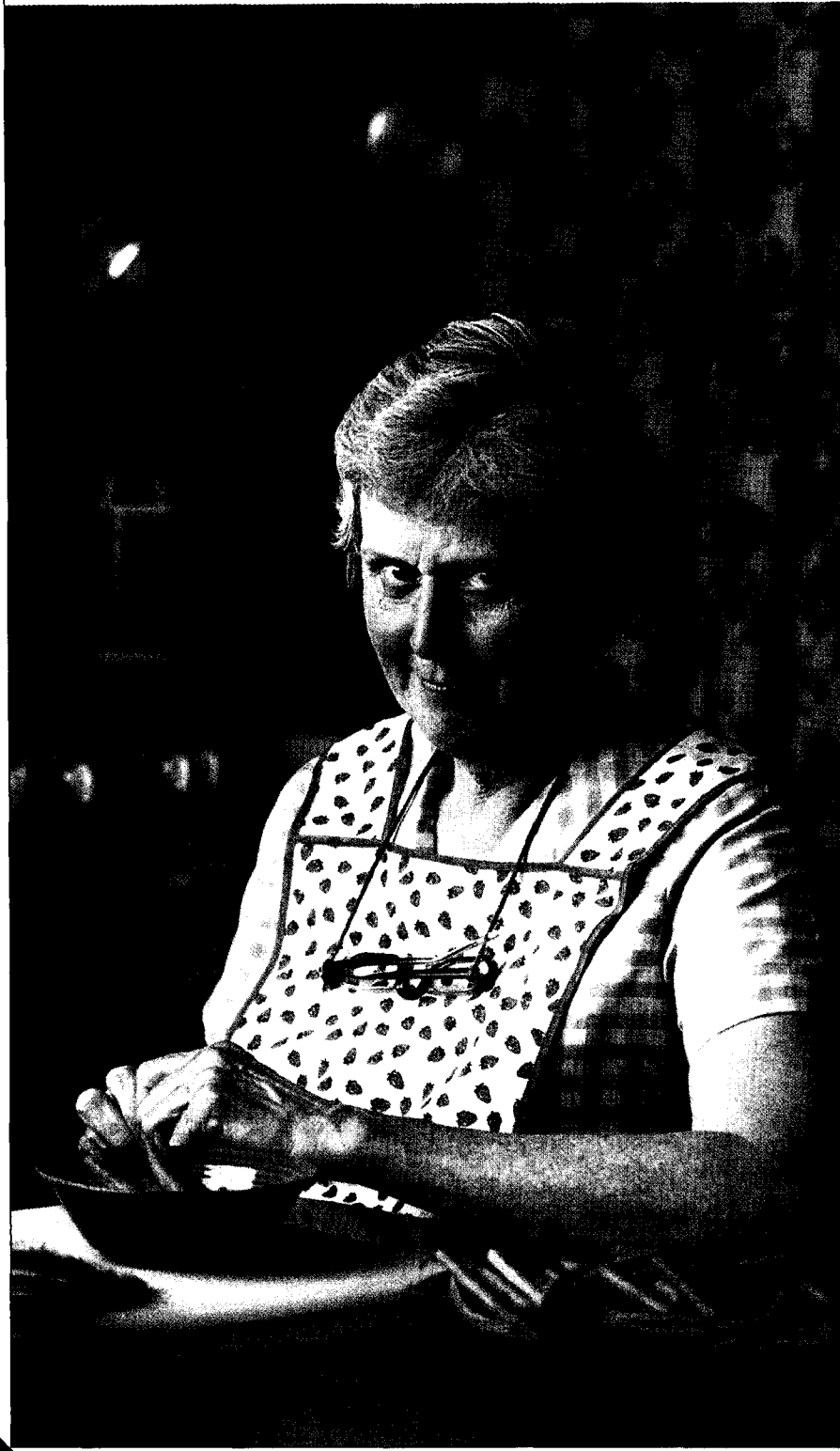
Los Angeles, the city that forgot time on its hard-driving rush to the future, history is still commonly classified as anything that happened before lunch. But even before the catastrophes struck, there were at least the beginnings of a groping for memory, a new affection and respect for

the past, possibly owing to an uncertainty about the future. Like old Hollywood stars, some of the architectural landmarks have been getting face-lifts. What's more, there are new cultural centers and restored pockets of civilization still largely undiscovered by tourists or, for that matter, by many Angelenos. Walking around in these neighborhoods can produce a startling sense of intimacy in a city seen more often than not through a car window.

Consider, for instance, a Saturday-morning walking tour of the old movie palaces in the city's historic Broadway theater district. Most of us are resigned these days to movie theaters built like the

by Les Daly

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Bradbury is a little like finding yourself walking through a cutaway model of a ship that has been meticulously pieced together inside a crystal bottle. Moreover, it is a delicate five-story symphony in the midst of the exciting, thumping cacophony outside on Spanish-speaking, salsa-for-the-senses Broadway. Across the street is the richly decorated 1918 Million Dollar Theater and the massive Grand Central Public Market, a cousin in sight and sound and fragrance to the boisterous covered markets of Mexico City and Barcelona. Both the theater and the market are now being restored by the Bradbury's owner-developer, Ira Yellin.

"There's no clear-cut answer to what is historic; perhaps that's what makes Los Angeles different," says Linda Dishman, the energetic executive director of the L.A. Conservancy. "We're very concerned with saving buildings that maybe wouldn't be assumed to be historic on the East Coast, because they're not old enough. Sometimes it's a tough sell."

The tendency to reach for some of the past before it slips away is fairly new for Los Angeles. The L.A. Conservancy itself is only sixteen years old. The focus of preservation reflects the interests of the city's residents, for little government direction is apparent. The emphasis is on private homes and neigh-

borhoods that survive because of their architectural distinction, and on buildings transformed by thoughtful developers for aesthetic as well as commercial reasons. The Bradbury Building is one example; the Wiltern Theater, on Wilshire Boulevard, a green-and-gold Art Deco terracotta masterpiece whose lobby design alone is worth the price of admission, is another. It is the closest thing to Radio City Music Hall within 3,000 miles.

Wayne Ratkovich, who restored the Wiltern, also turned an elegant 1928 men's clothing store into one of the country's most original and beautiful restaurants, Rex II Ristorante. In its time as a downtown haberdashery store it was richly furnished with dark wood paneling and elegantly designed cabinets and fixtures. They have been retained, artfully adapted, and mingled with soft, plump Art Deco chairs and sofas. The sensual setting is not always equaled by the menu, which is upscale Italian, but that is less noticeable from the balcony overlooking the restaurant where, softly lit by

original Art Deco lamps of Lalique crystal, romantic couples dance between courses, and ap-

petites flourish, and the servers wait. "People are so pleased by preservation," Ratkovich says, "that they come up to me and say 'thank you.' People seldom say thank you to a developer."

Caches of preserved architectural jewels can be found all around the city. They offer intriguing side trips to accent the more traditional tourist objectives. Santa Monica, for instance, is a kind of civic preservation package all its own. Instead of bulldozing their sagging commercial center to build another shopping mall, Santa Monica merchants carefully restored most of a three-block stretch of Third Street, banned automobiles, and set up an open-air vegetable, seafood, and flower market that now flourishes twice a week. It's one of more than forty European-style certified farmers' markets that have grown up in the Los Angeles area in the past decade or so. "This is really a producers' market, and everything sold here is raised, grown, or caught in California by the people running these stands," Laura Avery, the farmers'-market coordinator for the city of Santa Monica, told me recently. "They're certified by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. We're not just restoring buildings. We're trying to restore a way of life."

You can buy avocados and oranges and kiwis, tomatoes and dates and nuts, exotic herbs and olives, and locally baked bread in the market, walk fifty yards and hang off the edge of North America from the cliffs above the Pacific Ocean, and skip down to the beach for a picnic. Then take an after-lunch ride on the dazzling thoroughbred merry-go-round with its turn-of-the-century organ, singing in its own way at the start of Santa Monica Pier. Later, toward sunset, you can stroll up to Adelaide Drive to see some of the most distin-

guished examples of Craftsman architecture in existence. Craftsman houses are marked by fine carpentry, joinery, and detail work, make extensive use of wood, stone, and other natural materials, and often show a Japanese influence. They are comfortable with nature, and to-

Distinctive residences, clockwise from left: Craftsman joinery in Gamble House, in Pasadena; Richard Neutra's own home, in Silver Lake; handsome Victorians in Angelino Heights



day, after some seventy-five years, the houses on Adelaide Drive still gaze contentedly, through big front windows and from behind deep porches, across the canyon toward the Pacific.

Or, on the other side of town, try Pasadena. Just a few blocks off the route of the annual Tournament of Roses Parade, along Orange Grove Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard and overlooking the giant Rose Bowl itself, woody early-twentieth-century houses with deep, embracing porches relax along tree-shaded streets. The mood is set by the timbered, Japanese-accented Gamble House, designed by Charles and Henry Greene and considered a design masterpiece. The Greenes' distinctive architecture also fills nearby Arroyo Terrace. Occasionally an iconoclastic neighbor startles the eye, such as the Mayan temple-like Frank Lloyd Wright house called La Miniatura. The entire area "should be declared a national monument," one critic wrote. "The architecture is as important as that of Charleston, S.C., and the scenery is much better."

Or take a short drive, about a mile, from downtown Los Angeles on Sunset Boulevard. Traveling under the shoulder of the baseball stadium at Chavez Ravine, you'll arrive at the Angelino Heights neighborhood. Here you can walk among Victorian and Craftsman houses that have been carefully restored, some certainly beyond their original glory. Farther along Sunset Boulevard and north into the Silver Lake area is a virtual ceremonial honor guard of Richard Neutra homes.

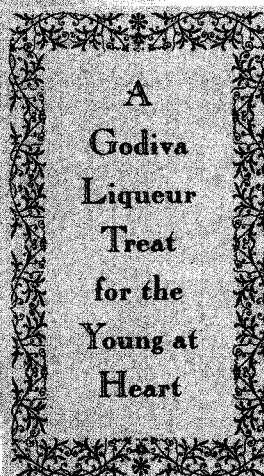
"Residential architecture, as carried out by leading architects such as Wright, Richard Neutra, the Greenes, and Irving Gill, took on a new life here," Thomas S. Hines, a professor of history and architecture at the University of California at Los Angeles, told me. "Houses here were prototypes and models not just for the wealthy but for those of more modest means. People who know architecture recognize Los Angeles as a very important city in the history of twentieth-century architecture."

ANGELENOS, who are notorious for making an event out of the opening of a new drugstore or car lot, to say nothing of a movie, have yet to focus their searchlights with the same intensity on the cultural side of their city. For instance, Westwood, a community just inland from Santa Monica, is best known locally for

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What better way to celebrate Mother's Day than by returning to the summer days of childhood with a big ice-cream sundae? Emily Luchetti, the nationally recognized pastry chef of San Francisco's top-rated Stars restaurant and the author of *Stars Desserts*, suggests a creamy,

sweet, totally satisfying chocolate sauce ladled warm over your favorite coffee, chocolate, and vanilla ice creams, with toasted hazelnuts and shavings of bittersweet and white chocolate. And, naturally, adding a dash of Godiva Liqueur will show that growing up has its own rewards.



Godiva Liqueur Black and White Sundae

For four:

- 1/4 cup Godiva Liqueur*
- 4 scoops coffee ice cream*
- 4 scoops chocolate ice cream*
- 4 scoops vanilla ice cream*
- warm chocolate sauce*
(see following recipe)
- 1/2 cup hazelnuts, toasted, skinned, and coarsely chopped*
- 1/3 cup each of bittersweet and white chocolate shavings**
- 4 tall sundae glasses or similar tall glasses*

To assemble the sundaes:

In the bottom of each glass place 1 tablespoon of Godiva Liqueur. Top it with a scoop of coffee ice cream, 1 tablespoon of the hazelnuts, and a little of the chocolate sauce. Add a scoop of chocolate ice cream, another tablespoon of the hazelnuts, and some more chocolate sauce. Then add a scoop of vanilla ice cream and cover

with chocolate sauce. Garnish the sundae with the bittersweet and white chocolate shavings. Serve immediately.

Warm Chocolate Sauce:

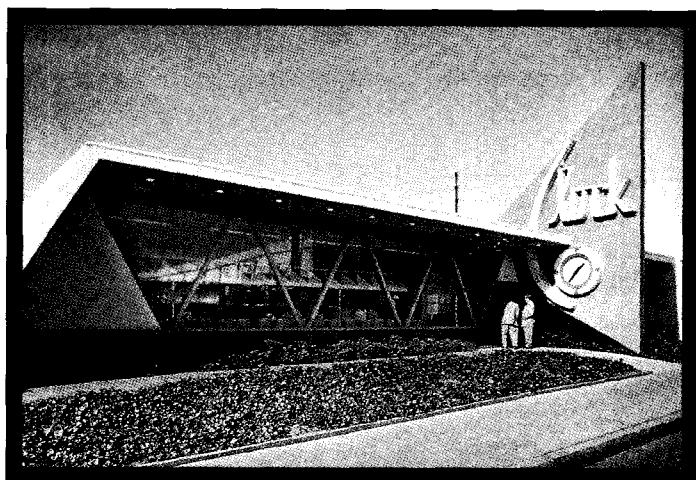
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate*
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter*
- 1 cup granulated sugar*
- 1/2 cup heavy cream*
- 1/2 cup Godiva Liqueur*

Melt the chocolate and butter over a double boiler. Stir in the sugar and the cream. Cook the sauce over medium heat for about 20 minutes, until it thickens and heavily coats the back of a spoon. Stir in the Godiva Liqueur. The chocolate sauce can be reheated in the microwave.



**To make chocolate shavings: take a one-ounce bar of chocolate and scrape off curls using a vegetable peeler.*

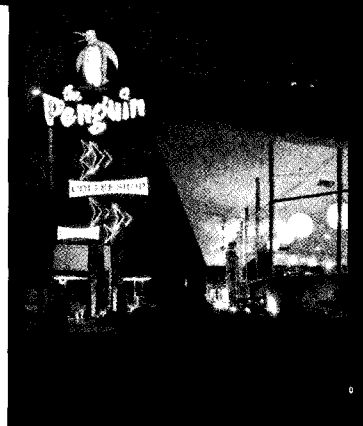
For a free recipe brochure call 1-800-55GODIVA



Googie-style coffee shops, reminiscent of 1950s car culture, clockwise from left: the Clock, the counter at Bob's Big Boy, The Penguin

the fact that within a few square blocks it houses eighteen movie screens. However, it is also the home of the 36,000-student University of California at Los Angeles. As such, Westwood is a strollable university town that still calls itself a village and occasionally feels like one. It is also the southern boundary of a three-mile-long "culture canyon" that is rapidly becoming a respectable rival to New York's Museum Mile. Like its East Coast counterpart, much of it can be enjoyed on foot.

Start at the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center, on Wilshire Boulevard, the home of some fine works by Sargent and Pissarro and Cassatt, a huge Daumier collection, Leonardo da Vinci's *Codex Hammer*, and one of the most agreeable museum bookshops in the city. From there it's only two blocks to the pocket-sized Mildred Mathias Botanical Garden, tucked into a corner of the UCLA campus. A stroll through the university grounds will bring you to the undulating, lushly landscaped Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden. This is a grassy nest of serenity beneath the jacarandas and the pines and the rustling eucalyptus, a place to hide away in the open air amid some seventy works by Noguchi, Calder, Matisse, and Rodin, among others. The sculpture garden in turn is the entry to the Frederick S. Wight Gallery, whose exhibitions tend to focus on the experimental and the educational. Its holdings include the Frank Lloyd Wright Collection of Japanese Prints. Another few hundred yards across the campus common is the \$22 million Fowler Museum of Cultural



based anthropological museums in the nation, the Fowler, its tile roofs and red brick blending comfortably with the university's earlier Romanesque structures, embraces more than 750,000 artifacts in its African, Oceanic, Latin American, folk-art, and pre-Columbian collections.

Just over a mile to the north, where Sepulveda Boulevard and the San Diego Freeway twine to the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains, crowds of building cranes and steam shovels now stand on the skyline waving their arms at the motorists below. There, at the pinnacle of this Los Angeles version of a museum mall, construction of the Skirball Cultural Center, devoted to Jewish life in America, is under way. It is scheduled to open next year. And just to the south is the first brilliant glitter of the crown jewel of the museum kingdom, the \$733 million Getty Center. The centerpiece of this 110-acre cultural park will be the J. Paul Getty Museum, due to open in 1997. The museum will be surrounded by five other buildings dedicated to research in and study and preservation of the arts and humanities, all set amid gardens, terraces, and natural landscape. Indicative of the architectural stature of Los Angeles today, these museum projects have brought to the Santa Monica hillside two of the most respected



History, opened in the fall of 1992. Ranked among the leading university-

architects in the world: Richard Meier, who is designing the Getty, and Moshe Safdie, who is responsible for the Skirball.

As serious as Los Angeles is becoming about its place in history and the history in this place, it still finds time for the quirky. One night last year some 250 people materialized out of the dark streets at the deserted edge of downtown for a

conference sponsored by the busy L.A. Conservancy. They were there to pay homage to those swooping, leaping, eye-catching coffee shops of tall roofs and taller signs, the glass and stainless-steel and red-leatherette kind of coffee shops that sprang out of Los Angeles in the 1950s and landed and multiplied like pointy bugs all over the country and, indeed, over much of the world.

"Those coffee shops are part of the social history of the people living here," the architect and writer Alan Hess has proclaimed. He is an authority on a design style that has come to be called Googie, after an architecturally innovative coffee shop that inspired a chain, now departed.

As the crowd pored over drawings, photographs, and sketches of coffee shops that still pin down a number of intersections throughout the city, a slender blond-haired man watched, bemused. "I'm surprised so many people are here," said Eldon Davis, whose firm designed a number of the shops, "even if it's free. I never thought these buildings were built to last or to be preserved. Anyway, if they want to preserve them, there's always film. I guess other people think differently."

They certainly do. During a coffee break that night more than fifty people signed a petition to urge the preservation of what was then the world's oldest operating McDonald's hamburger stand. Built in the nearby town of Downey in 1953, by the brothers Richard and Maurice McDonald, it has been called "unique historic evidence of the post World War II car culture and the architecture which reflected it." Its admirers have nominated it for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places. Unfortunately, it wasn't big enough to produce much of a profit, and after the earthquake McDonald's decided to close it, blaming structural damage. It was just a little Mac, to go. ☘

Clockwise from bottom left: Armel, Davis, Newlove Architects (2); Julius Shulman



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Who Speaks for the Middle Class?

by JACK BEATTY

WHEN I was a boy, we had something in America that the cultural critic Ralph Whitehead Jr., in an as yet unpublished book on work and social stratification, calls "the expanding middle class." It was one of the great social achievements of all time. Born in postwar prosperity, sustained by vindicated hope, it muted the class conflict that Marx had prophesied would one day destroy capitalism. Indeed, it was a reproof to the very idea of class.

The expanding middle class had in it two distinct kinds of workers: white-collar and blue-collar. Back then, thanks to the wages won for him by his union, the blue-collar man (the gender specification is unavoidable) could live next door to the white-collar man—not to the doctor, perhaps, but to the accountant, the teacher, the middle manager. This rough economic equality was a political fact of the first importance. It meant that, in a break with the drift of things in pre-war America, postwar America had no working class and no working-class politics. It had instead a middle-class



politics for an expanding middle class bigger in aspiration and self-identification than it was in fact—more people wanted to be seen as middle-class than had yet arrived at that state of felicity. Socialism in America, the German political economist Werner Sombart wrote in 1906, foundered upon "roast beef and apple pie," a metaphor for American plenty. The expanding middle class of the postwar era—property-owning, bourgeois in outlook, centrist in politics—hardly proved him wrong.

Something happened to this expanding middle class around 1973: the economic floor it stood on started to give way. After increasing by an average of 2.7 percent annually from 1947 to 1973, the median family income, adjusted for inflation, actually decreased, hitting a low point in the early 1980s, when it was supposed to be "morning in America"—and this even though the number of two-income families was rising.

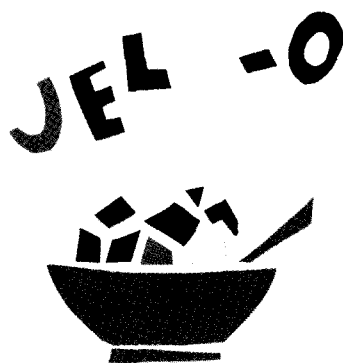
The numbers bludgeon complacency. From 1960 to 1974

*Whatever their rhetoric may be, as a practical matter
the Democrats think first of the less fortunate, the Republicans of the
well-to-do. Meanwhile, the nation-breaking crisis of
the middle class continues unabated*

real wages and salaries of experienced workers—regardless of their level of education—increased by 20 percent; from 1974 to 1989 workers with less than a high school education saw their wages fall by 21.7 percent, and high school graduates saw theirs fall by 14.7 percent. According to Lester Thurow, from 1973 to 1992 average wages for the bottom 60 percent of male workers fell 20 percent, and overall median male wages fell 12 percent. For non-supervisory workers real weekly wages fell by 20 percent and hourly wages by 13 percent. Among young males aged eighteen to twenty-four who worked full time, the percentage earning less than \$12,195 (in 1990 dollars) a year more than doubled during the 1980s, from 18 to 40. Among young women the percentage earning less than \$12,195 a year increased from 29 to 48. “Earnings prospects are collapsing for the bottom two-thirds of the work force,” Thurow says.

Even the lower tier of the top third is losing ground. In *The New Republic*, John B. Judis recently cited data showing that from 1989 to 1993 “the wages of white-collar executives and managers dropped 0.8%, the wages of technical workers fell by 2.9% and the wages of college-educated workers declined by 2.5%.” In 1993, for the first time ever, there were more unemployed white-collar than blue-collar workers. President Clinton said in his State of the Union address, “The recovery hasn’t touched every community or created enough jobs. Incomes are still stagnant.” Would that they were stagnant. In fact wages continued to decline during Clinton’s first year. According to data assembled by the economic analyst Richard Rothstein, in *LA Weekly*, blue-collar workers earned two percent less in the first half of 1993 than they did the year before, managers earned 2.5 percent less, and the number of involuntarily part-time jobs increased. The official unemployment rate is 6.4 percent, but if you include the involuntary part-timers along with workers too discouraged even to look for work, Rothstein says, then the unemployment rate looks more like 12 percent—and this is during the third year of a recovery.

In his new book, *Who We Are: A Portrait of America Based on the 1990 Census*, Sam Roberts cites similarly depressing figures. If you define low income as less than half the national median of \$37,152 for a family of four, or \$18,576; high income as at least



twice the median, or \$75,304; and middle income as the range in between, the following picture emerges. Since 1980, the census shows, the share of middle-income households shrank from 71 percent to 63 percent and the share of low-income households rose by more than a third, as did the share of affluent households. The affluent top fifth showed substantial gains in wealth from census to census. During

the 1980s, according to *America: What Went Wrong?*, by Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele, the number of Americans earning \$500,000 or more a year increased by 985 percent. In the course of the same decade the combined salaries of people earning \$1 million or more a year rose by a deeply affronting 2,184 percent. More—and richer—rich, more poor, fewer in the middle: the pattern is clear, and it is a Latin American, not a North American, pattern.

Citing statistics like these, Ralph Whitehead says that the expanding middle class has yielded to the “diverging middle class,” with blue-collar and “new-collar” clerical and technical workers falling out of the middle class into the heroically resigned ranks of the working poor—the approximately 56 million Americans, representing 22.8 percent of the population, with incomes insufficient to cover basic necessities, according to calculations cited by John E. Schwarz in *The Forgotten Americans*. Most of us are only a restructuring, a re-engineering, a firing, a major illness, or a divorce away from joining them.



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Setting a Course Downward

WHAT went wrong? It would take too long to answer that question in satisfyingly thick detail. But surely the lineage of the crisis includes

- *The oil-price shocks and rising energy prices after the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and again after the Iranian revolution, in 1979.* These acted like a huge new tax, multiplying the fixed costs of doing business in America. (Similar costs were incurred by Japan, but they motivated society-wide conservation—not, as here, political denial and a war for cheap oil.) Rising energy costs lowered productivity and, by spurring inflation, caused real wages to decline. Paid less, workers bought less and saved less. A negative cycle had started. It has yet to stop.
- *Insufficient savings and capital investment.* According to statistics taken from *Reviving the American Dream*, by Alice Rivlin, net private saving went from 8.7 percent of national income in the period 1947–1973 to 4.9 percent for 1986–1990. Since 1980 net domestic investment, private and public together, has gone from seven percent of national income to 4.7 percent, a loss of a third of this vital job-generating economic category.
- *The shift from high-wage manufacturing jobs to low-wage service jobs.* At the end of the 1950s, in the America of the expanding middle class, 31 percent of U.S. workers were employed in manufacturing industries; by 1987 only 18 percent were, the thirteen-point difference encompassing those who lost their jobs either to foreign manufacturers or to automation. In *Negotiating the Future, A Labor Perspective on American Business*, Barry and Irving Bluestone cite research that counted 900,000 manufacturing jobs, many of them paying family-sustaining wages, that were erased *each year* from 1978 to 1982, for a total of nearly five million jobs lost in five years. That is one of the most stunning social facts of our times, and also one of the most thoroughly ignored. Where were you when this catastrophe took place?
- *The decline in private-sector union membership.* At the start of the 1980s roughly 17 percent of employees in the private sector belonged to unions; at the end only 12 percent belonged. Back in the 1950s, 40 percent of the work force belonged. Those were the days of the expanding middle class. Unions were crucial to the difference.
- *Wall Street's unceasing pressure for bigger and bigger dividends, sooner and sooner.* By forcing companies to curtail investment in order to pay the high dividends demanded by institutional investors, "Wall Street has become the prime cause of U.S. deindustrialization," Will Hutton, the author of a book on Keynesian economics, writes in *The American Prospect*. Thus the real economy gets hollowed out in order to satisfy the casino economy. And yet this is how financial markets are supposed to work—restlessly, impatiently, with bloodless rationality. In other words, the clash between what

Wall Street wants and what Main Street needs is not a flaw in the system. It *is* the system. Marx would have called it a contradiction of capitalism.

- *A system of public education engulfed by a "rising tide of mediocrity,"* to quote from a 1983 report by a Department of Education commission. The decline in the quality of education, serious as it already is, has not yet had its full economic effect. For that we have to project ahead a few years, when the semiliterate casualties of the current system will enter the work force. What *will* they do?
- *The disinvestment in public infrastructure.* According to Richard Rothstein, "In 1965 we spent nearly 2.5% of the GNP on civilian public investment. Today it's less than 1%—so business, which relies on public services, is less productive than it could be." One widely cited study has found a strong correlation between economic growth and public expenditures on infrastructure. When the expenditures went down, starting in the early 1970s, so did growth.

To the struggling American family it may look as if the middle class is being victimized by vast, impersonal economic forces over which it has no control. But the crisis of the American middle class, ironically, is also in significant part its own fault. Its unquenchable appetite for imported goods has destroyed millions of domestic manufacturing jobs:

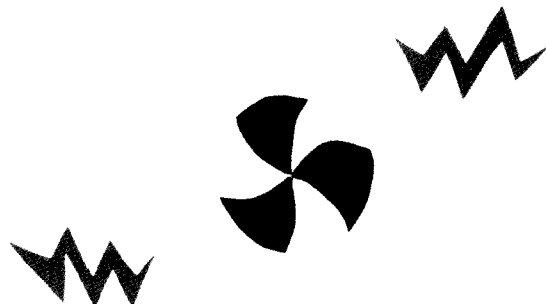
- Consumer-electronics imports had only 5.6 percent of the market in 1960; in 1986 they had 68 percent of the market.
- Automobile imports grew in market share from 4.1 percent to 31 percent over the same period.
- Apparel imports grew from 1.8 percent to 50 percent.
- Footwear imports grew from 2.3 percent to 58 percent.
- Machine-tool imports grew from 3.2 percent to 50 percent.

To borrow a formulation from my colleague James Fal-lows: As consumers, Americans have undermined their role as producers.

The Politics of Deadlock

IT is possible to *think up* policies that would nullify these causes of the middle-class crisis. But such policies would be politically incoherent.

For example, eliminating or cutting the capital-gains tax would increase savings and investment. That would make the economy expand, produc-

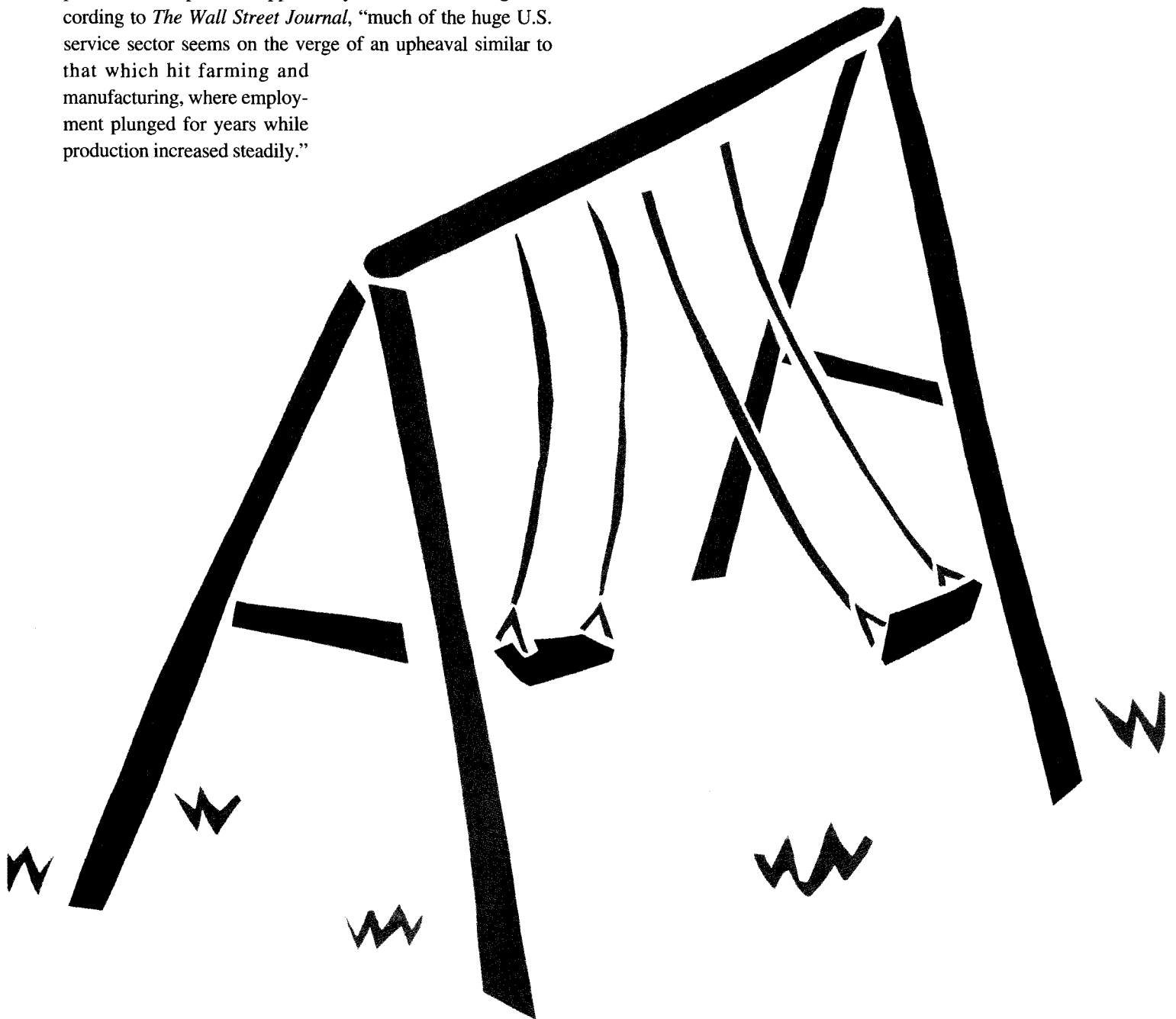


ing more and better-paying jobs. But because wealthy Americans save and invest much more than those of us who lack the money to do either, a capital-gains tax cut would also be a boon to the wealthy. Republicans would like that; Democrats would not. The opposite would be true of labor-law reform, which would make it easier for unions to conduct organizing drives, thus enabling more Americans to enjoy union wages. Liberals would be for it, conservatives against. Neither could embrace both labor-law reform and a capital-gains tax cut. Yet both need to be implemented to end the crisis of the middle class.

Increased capital investment in new technology would raise productivity, but probably at the cost of more high-wage manufacturing jobs. That is the paradox of productivity—it can go up, taking profits with it, while employment goes down. Machines don't require health insurance. Neither do they receive pensions. The paradox applies beyond manufacturing. According to *The Wall Street Journal*, "much of the huge U.S. service sector seems on the verge of an upheaval similar to that which hit farming and manufacturing, where employment plunged for years while production increased steadily."

More spending on infrastructure or education would be an unmatched investment in tomorrow's economy. In today's economy, however, it would mean higher taxes. These would come out of savings and wages, lowering private investment and aggregate demand.

To discourage consumption of imports, U.S.-made goods must compete on price and quality. The higher wages accompanying increased unionization of the work force would hurt both. They would be passed on as higher prices, which would make imports more competitive. Alternatively, as companies cut corners in production in order to pay increased labor costs, higher wages would lower the quality of domestic goods, making imports more attractive.



As these examples suggest, a politics comprehensively addressed to our crisis would be incoherent not only in theory—no one in that Administration would be likely to embrace the conflicting policies needed—but also in practice. Each of the parties has already prevented the other from passing its own pet nostrum for the crisis. George Bush tried to cut the capital-gains tax, but the Democratically controlled Senate blocked action on his plan. Bill Clinton tried to get Congress to approve his much reduced \$16 billion stimulus package, which would have marginally addressed the causes of the crisis by increasing spending on infrastructure, but a Republican filibuster blocked it.

The parties, one must conclude, are in the way of solving the crisis of the middle class. That is one reason so few Americans vote. Elections don't change things. The crisis continues unabated. Why bother?

The Civic Void

THE crisis of the middle class is of commanding gravity. Nothing else—not national security, not poverty, not crime, not the environment, not education, not health care, not even race relations—comes close. Why? Because the crisis breaks what Herbert Croly called “the promise of American life,” and that is bound to be prolific of adverse consequences.

The America of the expanding middle class had a centrist, two-party, post-ideological politics. The America of the diverging middle class is rapidly developing a populist anti-politics—programmatically inchoate, hostile to party and ideology alike, and profoundly cynical about government. If stability was the hallmark of the first kind of politics, instability may be that of the second. In the most recent presidential election Ross Perot got nearly 20 percent of the vote, a higher percentage than any third-party candidate since 1912, making Bill Clinton a plurality President with a weakened mandate. Significantly, 36 percent of voters said they would have voted for Perot if they thought he had a chance to win.

The Perot irruption fits into a trend full of portent for the two established parties, which political scientists depict as the irreplaceably sturdy props of our easy-to-take-for-granted stability. During the hundred years from 1864 to 1964, Gordon S. and Benjamin D. Black write in their new book, *The Politics of American Discontent*, only three third-party candidates—the Populist James B. Weaver, with 8.5 percent of the vote in 1892; the Progressive Theodore Roosevelt, with 27.4 percent in 1912; and the Progressive Robert La Follette, with 16.6 percent in 1924—managed to get more than six percent of the vote. Yet just in the past three decades three third-party candidates—George Wallace, with 13.5 percent in 1968; John Anderson, with 6.6 percent in 1980;

and Perot in 1992—have won more than six percent of the vote. Survey research further illustrates this rising discontent with the two parties. Whereas in 1938 only 13 percent of voters wanted to see a new, strong third party to compete for the presidency, 63 percent wanted one in 1992.

The anti-party reform politics of the Progressive era, in Richard Hofstadter's telling, took social root from the status anxieties of middle- and professional-class Americans who were losing ground to a new business elite. Something similar may be developing today as middle-class Americans, despairing of the parties' flagrant incapacity to halt the slide in their standard of living and furious at both parties for blocking each other's initiatives, turn away from them altogether and either embrace the send-them-a-message politics of protest or fall out of the electorate and into the civic void.

The crisis of the middle class feeds the property-tax revolt that in many school districts has forced cutbacks in school budgets just as competition from abroad is requiring dramatic improvement in education. People cannot be expected to pay more taxes if their incomes are declining or their jobs are threatened.

The crisis is hardening the attitude of the middle class toward the dependent poor, and to the extent that the poor are urban and black and the middle class suburban and white, race relations are under a new exogenous strain—the last thing they need.

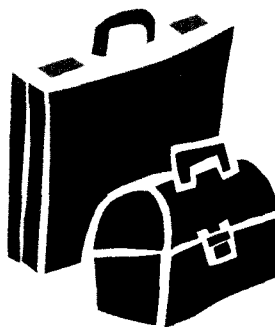
Yes, an economic expansion has been under way for some time, but compared with the historical averages for postwar recoveries, this one is unimpressive. As Daniel Mitchell, of the Heritage Foundation, has pointed out in *The Wall Street Journal*, “growth has been barely half the level experienced during past expansions,” and employment growth since the bottom of the cycle, 2.5 percent, has been far below the average of 9.2 percent. The late Walter Heller called the much stronger expansion of the Reagan years “a haunted recovery,” and that is what we have today—a recovery haunted by the untreated causes of the middle-class crisis.

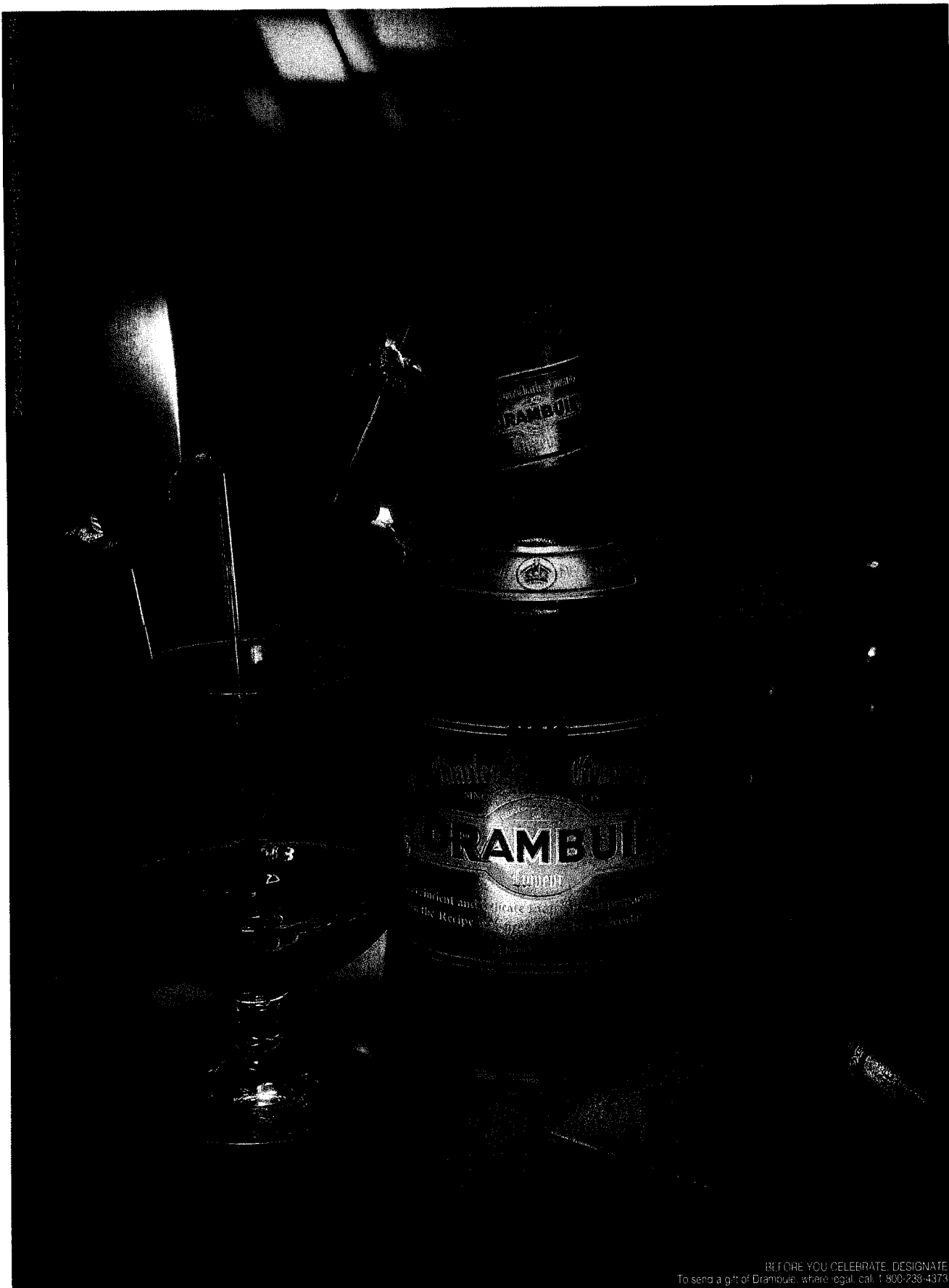
“We Americans have no confidence in the economy's future,” the Nobel laureate Robert Solow says. That is not a mind-set nurturant of sustained, broad-based economic growth, quarter after quarter, capable of reaching a wider swath of society than did the growth of the 1980s, which was heavily skewed toward the already wealthy.

Clinton and the Crisis

WHAT is the Clinton cure for the crisis of the American middle class?

First, what Clinton's program *won't* do: Largely because Clinton has laid such emphasis on deficit reduction, little in his program will—to return to our lists of causes—





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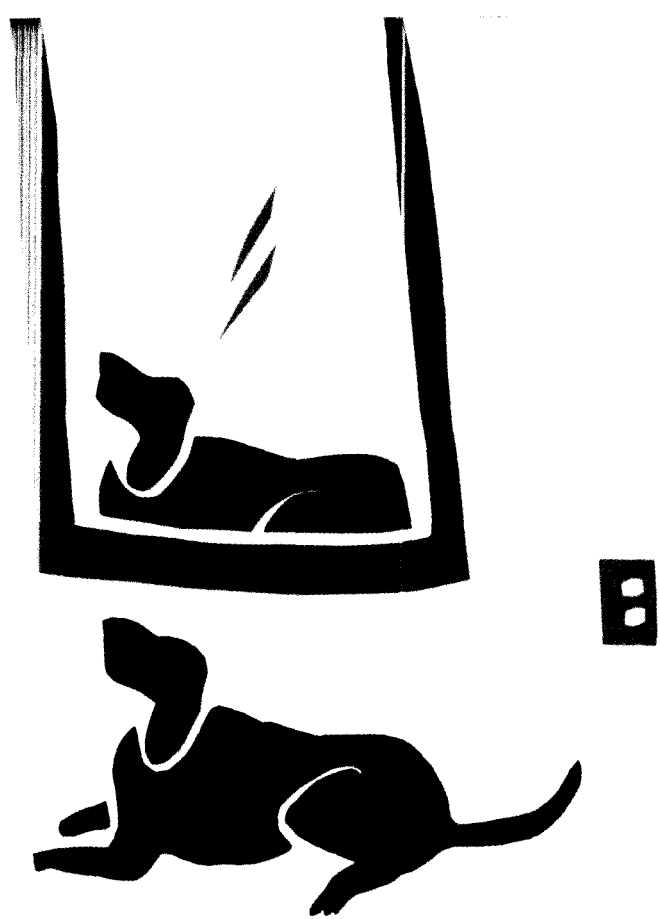
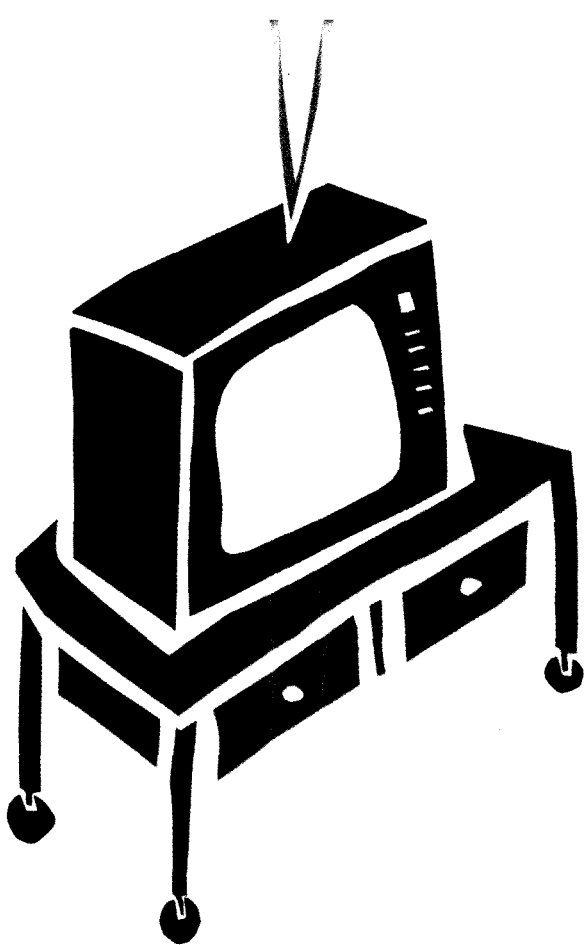
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increase the number of high-wage manufacturing jobs, help private-sector unions grow, keep Wall Street from hollowing out American industry, dramatically improve U.S. education, or discourage Americans from buying imported goods. At least one element of the Clinton program will worsen the crisis in the short run: the tax increase on the wealthy. Far and away the biggest savers in the country, they are likely to pay much of the increase out of savings—which will leave less money for investment, helping government finances but hurting the economy as a whole.

Clinton ran on the middle-class crisis (“The rich get the gold mine and the middle class gets the shaft”), but he has not governed as advertised. Throughout the campaign he said that the nation faced “twin deficits”—the federal budget deficit and a public-investment deficit accumulated over decades of the Cold War and twelve years of Republican neglect. Since then, however, the President has talked almost exclusively about the budget deficit, whose reduction is at the heart of his economic program. The public-investment deficit, the \$50 billion of spending on infrastructure and human resources each year for four years which candidate Clinton campaigned on, seems to have been forgotten by President Clinton. Embarrassingly, President Bush’s last budget increased spending on infrastructure, education, and training—public investment—by more than eight percent, whereas Clinton’s first budget cut public investment in the same categories by nearly one percent.

But surely deficit reduction is good for the middle class? Insofar as a lower deficit leads to lower interest rates, the middle class benefits today and its children will do so tomorrow when they face an Andes of debt instead of a Himalaya. But worried as the middle class is about the deficit, it is more worried about another economic threat. This one is not government-caused, like the deficit, or curable by either the liberal or the conservative orthodoxy, since both partake of the “Potomac illusion”: the belief that either more or less government has the magic power to shape social and economic developments that are primarily the result of social, technological, and economic, not governmental, evolutions. This worry is over jobs. A recent poll found that 43 percent of Americans rate unemployment as the most important economic issue facing the country. Only 26 percent picked the deficit.

The middle class, in short, wants employment security more than it wants deficit reduction. Is that an unreasonable want for an American to have in today’s global economy? Apparently the President regards it as such. A career politician himself, having mastered one skill, he has said many times that Americans must get used to changing careers several times in their working lives. But this is to embrace *inse-*

curity of employment as a controlling principle—as if there were nothing government could do or should do to slow the whirligig of change. Clinton’s premature surrender to the idea of job insecurity as the home face of the global economy amounts to an abandonment of the traditional role of his party, which has been to tame the long revolution



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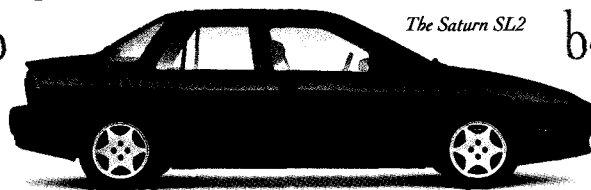


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of capitalism, to keep it from sacrificing social goods like security and stability and community to economic growth.

In the early years of the century progressive reformers did not capitulate to the leading agent of change of that day, the monopolistic corporation. They subordinated it to society by laying down the rules and regulating the tempo of change. In the 1930s Franklin D. Roosevelt did not allow business to use the mass unemployment of the Depression to break unions and cut wages. He worked for passage of the Wagner Act, which guaranteed the right of collective bargaining for workers, and he established minimum standards for wages. Both actions represented a victory of the society over the economy. So did the New Deal as a whole, which slowed the pace of the long revolution—saving capitalism by transforming and legitimizing it.

Absent a global New Deal, it may no longer be possible for any one country to sacrifice growth for social values, because the pressure from competitor countries will not permit it. Already global competition has forced corporation after corporation to slough off tens of thousands of employees and to cut back sharply on employee benefits. As the economist Bennett Harrison points out in his new book, *Lean and Mean*, from 1979 to 1989 the share of the private-sector work force covered by company pensions went from 50 percent to 43 percent, while “the incidence of employee coverage by health insurance at least partly provided by employers declined from 69 to 61 percent.” Harrison emphasizes that “these are very substantial declines for such a short period of time.” The labor analyst Harold Meyerson notes another effect of global competition. “Just five years ago,” he writes in *LA Weekly*, “one in four American jobs were contingent [meaning part-time]. Today, one in three are. The American economy’s response to the globalization of markets has been to turn us into a nation of temps.” More than 60 percent of the jobs created last year were in three industries: health care, restaurants and bars, and temporary help. Usually the number of workers forced to take part-time jobs falls in a recovery, a recent *Wall Street Journal* report on the business cycle noted. “Not this time. About 5.5% of all workers, or 6.5 million people, say they are unhappily working part time, a figure that hasn’t budged in two years.” The same pressures that are transforming the terms of employment in the private sector are acting on government, forcing revisions in legislation that might leave U.S. industry at a disadvantage in the great world scramble. The result is a family-leave act that does not require the employer to pay the employee while he or she is on leave, a toothless plant-closing bill, and a minimum wage that will not keep a full-time earner out of poverty.

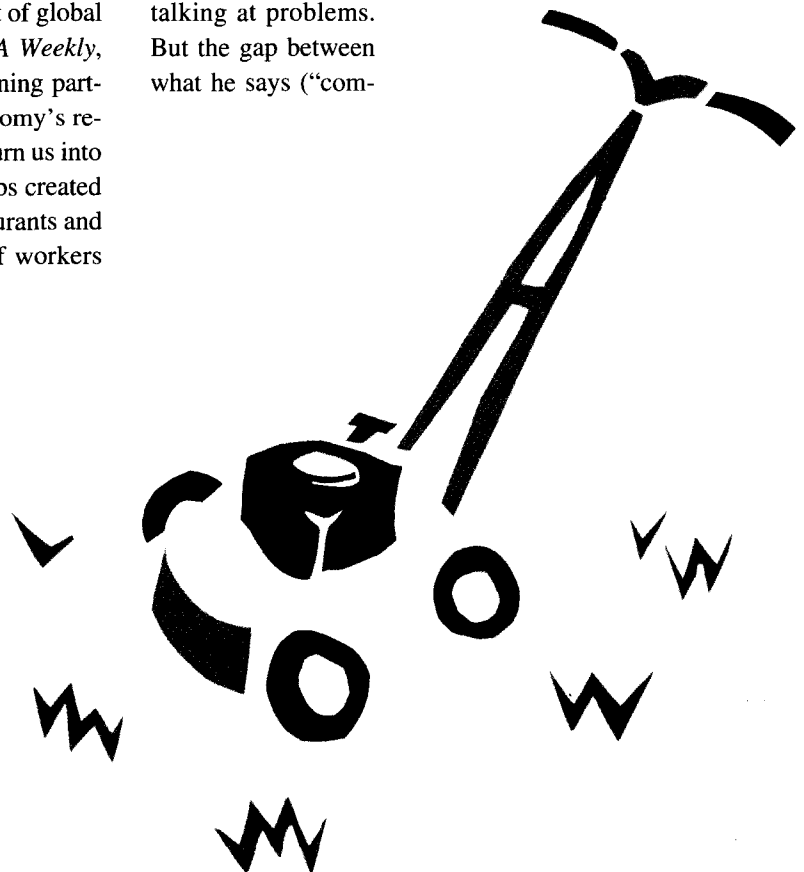


Clinton has repeatedly shown that, unlike Bush, he grasps the depth of the jobs crisis created by the new international economy. For example, in a speech during the debate over NAFTA, he said, “Too many Republicans would say that free trade today always equals economic growth. Well, it can, but only if we have a comprehensive national strategy to

promote that kind of growth. Some Democrats would say that free trade today always equals exporting jobs and lowering wages. Well, it sure can if you don’t have a comprehensive economic strategy to maintain a high-wage, high-growth economy.”

So where is this comprehensive strategy? It would seem to amount to little more than such infrastructure rebuilding as is consistent with deficit reduction—that is, not much. In addition, Clinton proposes to replace the current system of unemployment insurance with a re-employment program. The scope of this program, however, will be limited by two factors. First, what jobs will the structurally unemployed—many of them victims either of global free trade or of automation—be retrained for? Secretary of Labor Robert Reich has talked about increasing the number of “technicians,” but labor leaders have rightly asked, “Doing what?” The second limiting factor is funding. Clinton’s campaign promise to require large companies to devote 1.5 percent of payroll to job-training programs has gone the way of his promise of a “middle-class tax cut,” a casualty of the very global economy whose pressures it was supposed to temper.

Clinton is good at talking at problems. But the gap between what he says (“com-

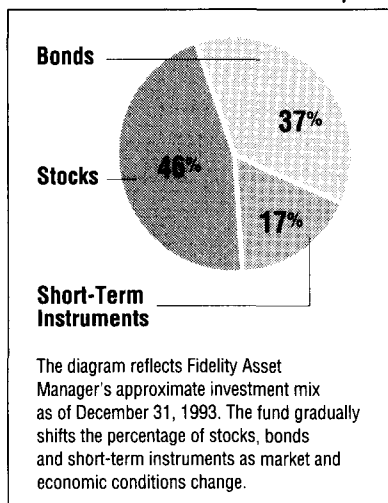


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prehensive national strategy”) and what his Administration does is wide. “To govern is to choose,” John F. Kennedy said. Clinton has made his choice—deficit reduction. It is a defensible choice. But even if the deficit were cut to zero, the middle class would remain in crisis.

An Unbreakable Circle?

CLINTON has a compelling theory of prosperity. He wants the middle class to face the future of global free trade with hope, not fear. He wants foreign customers for American goods—that’s his recipe for “growing” the economy. But there is an unspoken premise in this recipe: that there are not enough customers in America to buy American goods. In 1914 Henry Ford increased the wages of his employees enough so that they could buy his car, reasoning that “if you cut wages, you just cut the number of your customers.” That made sense in a closed market, but not in the customer-rich world market. Instead of raising U.S. wages to make U.S. customers for U.S.-made goods, corporations will be able to export their goods to the niches of the world market that can afford them: Chinese yuppies, two-career Mexican couples, German investment bankers, French bureaucrats, Italian clothiers—the international versions of the folks who flourished domestically in the 1980s. The model here is Japan, which has expanded its economy by selling goods abroad that many of its people cannot afford at home. By imperceptible degrees we might come to exchange a lower standard of living for the chance to work at all.

The American middle class was not made by free trade. Historically it grew behind protective tariffs, which favored U.S. producers over U.S. consumers. The bottomless demand for American goods in an American-dominated world economy after the war also helped—as did military Keynesianism, the industrial policy of the Cold War. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that cuts in military spending will cause the loss of 1.9 million jobs by 1997. As for free trade, Clinton often speaks of it as an end in itself rather than as a means to an end—prosperity—reachable by other routes. His tough line with Japan over its trade surplus with the United States is encouraging, but it is clear that he regards selective protection as an expedient born of failure and not as an alternative path to growth. He is probably right about that; it is too late in the day—interdependence has gone much too far—for protection to work. Yet no less a figure than Lester Thurow, exercising his penchant for being provocative, has said that Clinton, to achieve his goal of a sustained domestic economic growth rate of four percent, will have to stem imports. “You would call it protectionism,” Thurow says. “I would say it’s isolation, but he would say it’s common

sense to get re-elected.” It may make economic but not political common sense, not for the Bill Clinton who staked his presidency on getting NAFTA enacted into law. He will rise or fall by free trade.

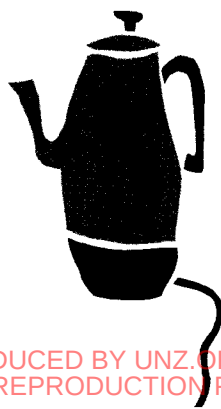
In Clinton’s economic vision the positive effects of free trade abroad must be balanced against two likely negative effects at home. The first is an intensification of the trend toward inequality by education, for only the better-educated will be safe from low-wage competition in the global labor pool, and the only U.S. goods that will be competitive in the global marketplace will be skill-intensive goods. The second negative effect, which follows from the first, is a steadily contracting middle class, from which blue- and new-collar technical and clerical workers will have been excluded.

“I have got to lay a foundation of personal security for the working people of this country and their families in order to succeed as your President,” Clinton told the AFL-CIO convention last fall. The Administration’s program for health-care reform deals with a symptom of the middle-class anxiety that Clinton identified in that speech. But follow that anxiety to its roots and health care has the look of a substitute issue, a displacement of graver social and economic fears—of one’s job getting swamped in the global labor pool, of seeing the middle-class standard of living uncheckably decline—onto the consolingly manageable politics of remedy.

Between Clinton’s desire to increase personal security and his commitment to full U.S. participation in the global market there may be a conflict of essence. Whether billed as stability versus change or as society versus economy, this conflict is unlikely to be ended by promises of job retraining from a federal bureaucracy that, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, now offers 150 separate education and training programs run by fourteen government agencies, one of which offers loans to 81,600 cosmetology students a year when the private sector has jobs for only 17,000 of them.

The crisis of the middle class is both a cause and a consequence of the haunted economy. For the economy to improve—say, to the point at which only one in four jobs is part-time instead of one in three—the middle class must first feel more secure. Otherwise demand will remain relatively weak. But for the middle class to feel more secure, the economy must first improve—by which I mean not only grow but cease threatening livelihoods by unblunted change, whether in the shape of foreign competition or of domestic restructuring. For the wages of leanness and meanness (from 1979 to 1992 the Fortune 500 let go of 4.4 million workers) is fear, and the wages of fear is lackluster consumption.

What we have here, in short, is a circular, self-generating crisis for which it is hard to come up with convincingly efficacious solutions. ☞





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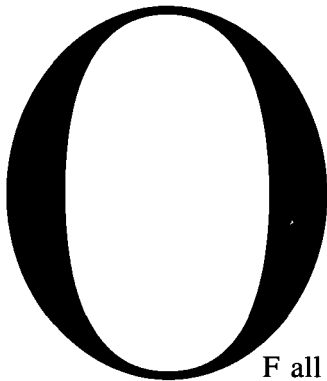


POWER PLAY

THE CODE OF THE STREETS

by ELIJAH ANDERSON

*In this essay in urban anthropology
a social scientist takes us inside a world
most of us glimpse only in grisly headlines—
“Teen Killed in Drive-By Shooting”—
to show us how a desperate
search for respect governs
social relations among
many African-American
young men*



F all the problems besetting the poor inner-city black community, none is more pressing than that of interpersonal violence and aggression. It wreaks havoc daily with the lives of community residents and increasingly spills over into downtown and residential middle-class areas. Muggings, burglaries, carjackings, and drug-related shootings, all of which may leave their victims or innocent bystanders dead, are now common enough to concern all urban

and many suburban residents. The inclination to violence springs from the circumstances of life among the ghetto poor—the lack of jobs that pay a living wage, the stigma of race, the fallout from rampant drug use and drug trafficking, and the resulting alienation and lack of hope for the future.

Simply living in such an environment places young people at special risk of falling victim to aggressive behavior. Although there are often forces in the community which can counteract

AT THE HEART OF THE CODE IS THE ISSUE OF RESPECT—LOOSELY DEFINED

the negative influences, by far the most powerful being a strong, loving, “decent” (as inner-city residents put it) family committed to middle-class values, the despair is pervasive enough to have spawned an oppositional culture, that of “the streets,” whose norms are often consciously opposed to those of mainstream society. These two orientations—decent and street—socially organize the community, and their coexistence has important consequences for residents, particularly children growing up in the inner city. Above all, this environment means that even youngsters whose home lives reflect mainstream values—and the majority of homes in the community do—must be able to handle themselves in a street-oriented environment.

This is because the street culture has evolved what may be called a code of the streets, which amounts to a set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior, including violence. The rules prescribe both a proper comportment and a proper way to respond if challenged. They regulate the use of violence and so allow those who are inclined to aggression to precipitate violent encounters in an approved way. The rules have been established and are enforced mainly by the street-oriented, but on the streets the distinction between street and decent is often irrelevant; everybody knows that if the rules are violated, there are penalties. Knowledge of the code is thus largely defensive; it is literally necessary for operating in public. Therefore, even though families with a decency orientation are usually opposed to the values of the code, they often reluctantly encourage their children’s familiarity with it to enable them to negotiate the inner-city environment.

At the heart of the code is the issue of respect—loosely defined as being treated “right,” or granted the deference one deserves. However, in the troublesome public environment of the inner city, as people increasingly feel buffeted by forces beyond their control, what one deserves in the way of respect becomes more and more problematic and uncertain. This in turn further opens the issue of respect to sometimes intense interpersonal negotiation. In the street culture, especially among young people, respect is viewed as almost an external entity that is hard-won but easily lost, and so must constantly be guarded. The rules of the code in fact provide a framework for negotiating respect. The person whose very appearance—including his clothing, demeanor, and way of moving—deters transgressions feels that he possesses, and may be considered by others to possess, a measure of respect. With the right amount of respect, for instance, he can avoid “being bothered” in public. If he is bothered, not only may he be in physical danger but he has been disgraced or “dissed” (disrespected). Many of the forms that dissing can take might seem petty to middle-class people (maintaining eye contact for too long, for example), but to those invested

in the street code, these actions become serious indications of the other person’s intentions. Consequently, such people become very sensitive to advances and slights, which could well serve as warnings of imminent physical confrontation.

This hard reality can be traced to the profound sense of alienation from mainstream society and its institutions felt by many poor inner-city black people, particularly the young. The code of the streets is actually a cultural adaptation to a profound lack of faith in the police and the judicial system. The police are most often seen as representing the dominant white society and not caring to protect inner-city residents. When called, they may not respond, which is one reason many residents feel they must be prepared to take extraordinary measures to defend themselves and their loved ones against those who are inclined to aggression. Lack of police accountability has in fact been incorporated into the status system: the person who is believed capable of “taking care of himself” is accorded a certain deference, which translates into a sense of physical and psychological control. Thus the street code emerges where the influence of the police ends and personal responsibility for one’s safety is felt to begin. Exacerbated by the proliferation of drugs and easy access to guns, this volatile situation results in the ability of the street-oriented minority (or those who effectively “go for bad”) to dominate the public spaces.

DECENT AND STREET FAMILIES

ALTHOUGH almost everyone in poor inner-city neighborhoods is struggling financially and therefore feels a certain distance from the rest of America, the decent and the street family in a real sense represent two poles of value orientation, two contrasting conceptual categories. The labels “decent” and “street,” which the residents themselves use, amount to evaluative judgments that confer status on local residents. The labeling is often the result of a social contest among individuals and families of the neighborhood. Individuals of the two orientations often coexist in the same extended family. Decent residents judge themselves to be so while judging others to be of the street, and street individuals often present themselves as decent, drawing distinctions between themselves and other people. In addition, there is quite a bit of circumstantial behavior—that is, one person may at different times exhibit both decent and street orientations, depending on the circumstances. Although these designations result from so much social jockeying, there do exist concrete features that define each conceptual category.

Generally, so-called decent families tend to accept mainstream values more fully and attempt to instill them in their

AS BEING TREATED "RIGHT," OR GRANTED THE DEFERENCE ONE DESERVES.

children. Whether married couples with children or single-parent (usually female) households, they are generally "working poor" and so tend to be better off financially than their street-oriented neighbors. They value hard work and self-reliance and are willing to sacrifice for their children. Because they have a certain amount of faith in mainstream society, they harbor hopes for a better future for their children, if not for themselves. Many of them go to church and take a strong interest in their children's schooling. Rather than dwelling on the real hardships and inequities facing them, many such decent people, particularly the increasing number of grandmothers raising grandchildren, see their difficult situation as a test from God and derive great support from their faith and from the church community.

Extremely aware of the problematic and often dangerous environment in which they reside, decent parents tend to be strict in their child-rearing practices, encouraging children to respect authority and walk a straight moral line. They have an almost obsessive concern about trouble of any kind and remind their children to be on the lookout for people and situations that might lead to it. At the same time, they are themselves polite and considerate of others, and teach their children to be the same way. At home, at work, and in church, they strive hard to maintain a positive mental attitude and a spirit of cooperation.

So-called street parents, in contrast, often show a lack of consideration for other people and have a rather superficial sense of family and community. Though they may love their children, many of them are unable to cope with the physical and emotional demands of parenthood, and find it difficult to reconcile their needs with those of their children. These families, who are more fully invested in the code of the streets than the decent people are, may aggressively socialize their children into it in a normative way. They believe in the code and judge themselves and others according to its values.

In fact the overwhelming majority of families in the inner-city community try to approximate the decent-family model, but there are many others who clearly represent the worst fears of the decent family. Not only are their financial resources extremely limited, but what little they have may easily be misused. The lives of the street-oriented are often marked by disorganization. In the most desperate circumstances people frequently have a limited understanding of priorities and consequences, and so frustrations mount over bills, food, and, at times, drink, cigarettes, and drugs. Some tend toward self-destructive behavior; many street-oriented women are crack-addicted ("on the pipe"), alcoholic, or involved in complicated relationships with men who abuse them. In addition, the seeming intractability of their situation, caused in large part by the lack of well-paying jobs and the persistence of racial discrimination, has engendered

deep-seated bitterness and anger in many of the most desperate and poorest blacks, especially young people. The need both to exercise a measure of control and to lash out at somebody is often reflected in the adults' relations with their children. At the least, the frustrations of persistent poverty shorten the fuse in such people—contributing to a lack of patience with anyone, child or adult, who irritates them.

In these circumstances a woman—or a man, although men are less consistently present in children's lives—can be quite aggressive with children, yelling at and striking them for the least little infraction of the rules she has set down. Often little if any serious explanation follows the verbal and physical punishment. This response teaches children a particular lesson. They learn that to solve any kind of interpersonal problem one must quickly resort to hitting or other violent behavior. Actual peace and quiet, and also the appearance of calm, respectful children conveyed to her neighbors and friends, are often what the young mother most desires, but at times she will be very aggressive in trying to get them. Thus she may be quick to beat her children, especially if they defy her law, not because she hates them but because this is the way she knows to control them. In fact, many street-oriented women love their children dearly. Many mothers in the community subscribe to the notion that there is a "devil in the boy" that must be beaten out of him or that socially "fast girls need to be whupped." Thus much of what borders on child abuse in the view of social authorities is acceptable parental punishment in the view of these mothers.

Many street-oriented women are sporadic mothers whose children learn to fend for themselves when necessary, foraging for food and money any way they can get it. The children are sometimes employed by drug dealers or become addicted themselves. These children of the street, growing up with little supervision, are said to "come up hard." They often learn to fight at an early age, sometimes using short-tempered adults around them as role models. The street-oriented home may be fraught with anger, verbal disputes, physical aggression, and even mayhem. The children observe these goings-on, learning the lesson that might makes right. They quickly learn to hit those who cross them, and the dog-eat-dog mentality prevails. In order to survive, to protect oneself, it is necessary to marshal inner resources and be ready to deal with adversity in a hands-on way. In these circumstances physical prowess takes on great significance.

In some of the most desperate cases, a street-oriented mother may simply leave her young children alone and unattended while she goes out. The most irresponsible women can be found at local bars and crack houses, getting high and socializing with other adults. Sometimes a troubled woman will leave very young children alone for days at a time. Reports of crack addicts abandoning their children have be-

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come common in drug-infested inner-city communities. Neighbors or relatives discover the abandoned children, often hungry and distraught over the absence of their mother. After repeated absences, a friend or relative, particularly a grandmother, will often step in to care for the young children, sometimes petitioning the authorities to send her, as guardian of the children, the mother's welfare check, if the mother gets one. By this time, however, the children may well have learned the first lesson of the streets: survival itself, let alone respect, cannot be taken for granted; you have to fight for your place in the world.

CAMPAIGNING FOR RESPECT

THESE realities of inner-city life are largely absorbed on the streets. At an early age, often even before they start school, children from street-oriented homes gravitate to the streets, where they "hang"—socialize with their peers. Children from these generally permissive homes have a great deal of latitude and are allowed to "rip and run" up and down the street. They often come home from school, put their books down, and go right back out the door. On school nights eight- and nine-year-olds remain out until nine or ten o'clock (and teenagers typically come in whenever they want to). On the streets they play in groups that often become the source of their primary social bonds. Children from decent homes tend to be more carefully supervised and are thus likely to have curfews and to be taught how to stay out of trouble.

When decent and street kids come together, a kind of social shuffle occurs in which children have a chance to go either way. Tension builds as a child comes to realize that he must choose an orientation. The kind of home he comes from influences but does not determine the way he will ultimately turn out—although it is unlikely that a child from a thoroughly street-oriented family will easily absorb decent values on the streets. Youths who emerge from street-oriented families but develop a decency orientation almost always learn those values in another setting—in school, in a youth group, in church. Often it is the result of their involvement with a caring "old head" (adult role model).

In the street, through their play, children pour their individual life experiences into a common knowledge pool, affirming, confirming, and elaborating on what they have observed in the home and matching their skills against those of others. And they learn to fight. Even small children test one another, pushing and shoving, and are ready to hit other children over circumstances not to their liking. In turn, they are readily hit by other children, and the child who is toughest prevails. Thus the violent resolution of disputes, the hitting and cursing, gains social reinforcement. The child in effect is initiated into a system that is really a way of campaigning for respect.

In addition, younger children witness the disputes of old-

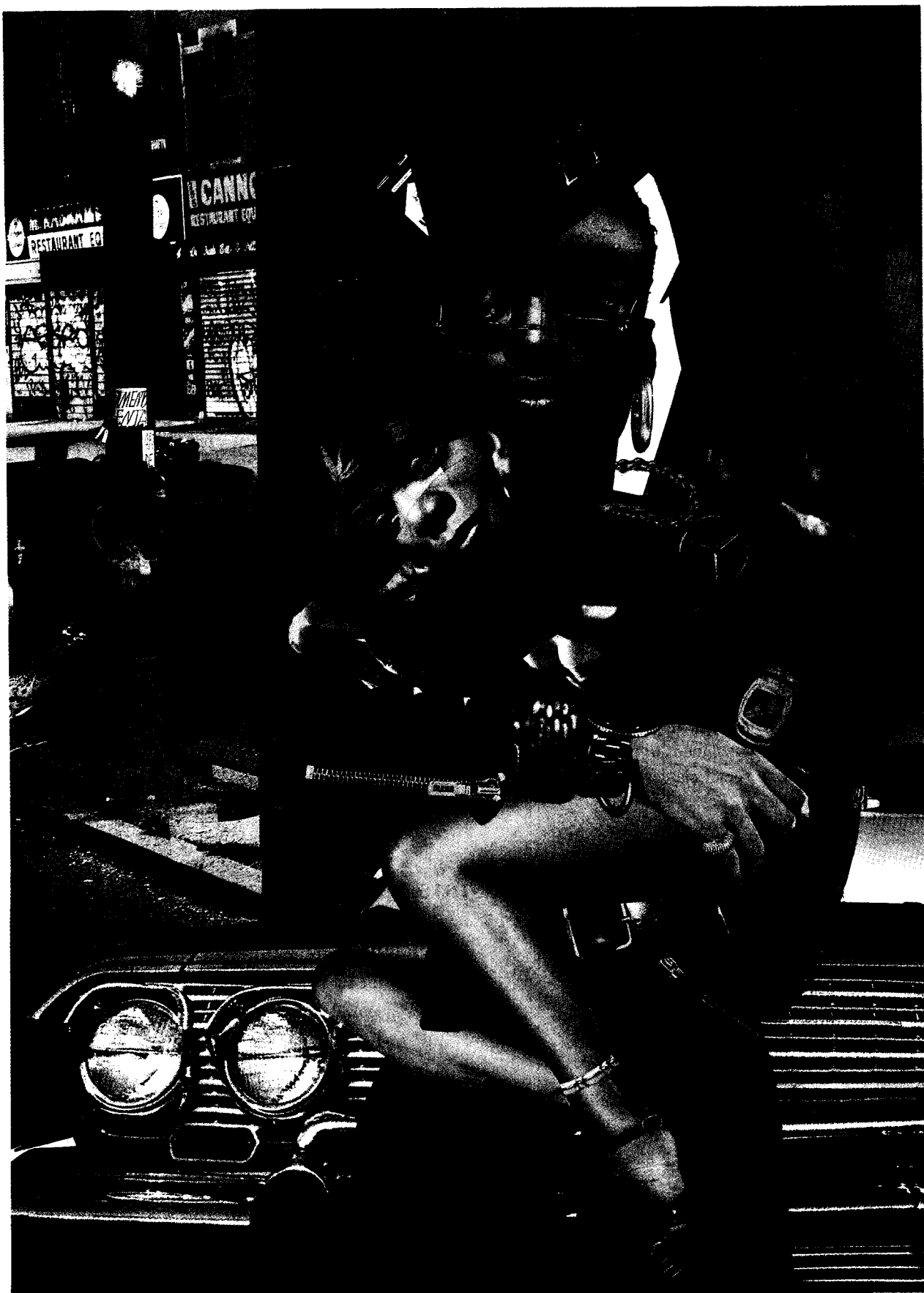
er children, which are often resolved through cursing and abusive talk, if not aggression or outright violence. They see that one child succumbs to the greater physical and mental abilities of the other. They are also alert and attentive witnesses to the verbal and physical fights of adults, after which they compare notes and share their interpretations of the event. In almost every case the victor is the person who physically won the altercation, and this person often enjoys the esteem and respect of onlookers. These experiences reinforce the lessons the children have learned at home: might makes right, and toughness is a virtue, while humility is not. In effect they learn the social meaning of fighting. When it is left virtually unchallenged, this understanding becomes an ever more important part of the child's working conception of the world. Over time the code of the streets becomes refined.

Those street-oriented adults with whom children come in contact—including mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, boyfriends, cousins, neighbors, and friends—help them along in forming this understanding by verbalizing the messages they are getting through experience: "Watch your back." "Protect yourself." "Don't punk out." "If somebody messes with you, you got to pay them back." "If someone disses you, you got to straighten them out." Many parents actually impose sanctions if a child is not sufficiently aggressive. For example, if a child loses a fight and comes home upset, the parent might respond, "Don't you come in here crying that somebody beat you up; you better get back out there and whup his ass. I didn't raise no punks! Get back out there and whup his ass. If you don't whup his ass, I'll whup your ass when you come home." Thus the child obtains reinforcement for being tough and showing nerve.

While fighting, some children cry as though they are doing something they are ambivalent about. The fight may be against their wishes, yet they may feel constrained to fight or face the consequences—not just from peers but also from caretakers or parents, who may administer another beating if they back down. Some adults recall receiving such lessons from their own parents and justify repeating them to their children as a way to toughen them up. Looking capable of taking care of oneself as a form of self-defense is a dominant theme among both street-oriented and decent adults who worry about the safety of their children. There is thus at times a convergence in their child-rearing practices, although the rationales behind them may differ.

SELF-IMAGE BASED ON "JUICE"

BY the time they are teenagers, most youths have either internalized the code of the streets or at least learned the need to comport themselves in accordance with its rules, which chiefly have to do with interpersonal communication. The code revolves around the presen-



TROPHIES

AMONG THE HARD-CORE STREET-ORIENTED, THE CLEAR RISK OF MEETING

tation of self. Its basic requirement is the display of a certain predisposition to violence. Accordingly, one's bearing must send the unmistakable if sometimes subtle message to "the next person" in public that one is capable of violence and mayhem when the situation requires it, that one can take care of oneself. The nature of this communication is largely determined by the demands of the circumstances but can include facial expressions, gait, and verbal expressions—all of which are geared mainly to deterring aggression. Physical appearance, including clothes, jewelry, and grooming, also plays an important part in how a person is viewed; to be respected, it is important to have the right look.

Even so, there are no guarantees against challenges, because there are always people around looking for a fight to increase their share of respect—or "juice," as it is sometimes called on the street. Moreover, if a person is assaulted, it is important, not only in the eyes of his opponent but also in the eyes of his "running buddies," for him to avenge himself. Otherwise he risks being "tried" (challenged) or "moved on" by any number of others. To maintain his honor he must show he is not someone to be "messed with" or "dissed." In general, the person must "keep himself straight" by managing his position of respect among others; this involves in part his self-image, which is shaped by what he thinks others are thinking of him in relation to his peers.

Objects play an important and complicated role in establishing self-image. Jackets, sneakers, gold jewelry, reflect not just a person's taste, which tends to be tightly regulated among adolescents of all social classes, but also a willing-

ness to possess things that may require defending. A boy wearing a fashionable, expensive jacket, for example, is vulnerable to attack by another who covets the jacket and either cannot afford to buy one or wants the added satisfaction of depriving someone else of his. However, if the boy forgoes the desirable jacket and wears one that isn't "hip," he runs the risk of being teased and possibly even assaulted as an unworthy person. To be allowed to hang with certain prestigious crowds, a boy must wear a different set of expensive clothes—sneakers and athletic suit—every day. Not to be able to do so might make him appear socially deficient. The youth comes to covet such items—especially when he sees easy prey wearing them.

In acquiring valued things, therefore, a person shores up his identity—but since it is an identity based on having things, it is highly precarious. This very precariousness gives a heightened sense of urgency to staying even with peers, with whom the person is actually competing. Young men and women who are able to command respect through their presentation of self—by allowing their possessions and their body language to speak for them—may not have to campaign for regard but may, rather, gain it by the force of their manner. Those who are unable to command respect in this way must actively campaign for it—and are thus particularly alive to slights.

One way of campaigning for status is by taking the possessions of others. In this context, seemingly ordinary objects can become trophies imbued with symbolic value that far exceeds their monetary worth. Possession of the trophy

THE BODY OF MY BROTHER OSIRIS IS IN THE MUSTARD SEED

Seed from an early Egyptian tomb,
after water damage to the case
in the *Historisches Museum*,
sprouted in 1955.

That was the year my brother's foot
slipped on spray-wet log.
He was gone
into the whitewater out of sight.

Just downstream
the back of his head
came up
in a narrow chute.

Between terrible rocks
the back of my brother's head
looked wet and small and dark.
I watched it through the roar.

Through tears, afraid
to pray, I told God
he was swimming. Wait.
He would lift his face.

—BROOKS HAXTON

A VIOLENT DEATH MAY BE PREFERABLE TO BEING "DISSED" BY ANOTHER.

can symbolize the ability to violate somebody—to “get in his face,” to take something of value from him, to “dis” him, and thus to enhance one’s own worth by stealing someone else’s. The trophy does not have to be something material. It can be another person’s sense of honor, snatched away with a derogatory remark. It can be the outcome of a fight. It can be the imposition of a certain standard, such as a girl’s getting herself recognized as the most beautiful. Material things, however, fit easily into the pattern. Sneakers, a pistol, even somebody else’s girlfriend, can become a trophy. When a person can take something from another and then flaunt it, he gains a certain regard by being the owner, or the controller, of that thing. But this display of ownership can then provoke other people to challenge him. This game of who controls what is thus constantly being played out on inner-city streets, and the trophy—extrinsic or intrinsic, tangible or intangible—identifies the current winner.

An important aspect of this often violent give-and-take is its zero-sum quality. That is, the extent to which one person can raise himself up depends on his ability to put another person down. This underscores the alienation that permeates the inner-city ghetto community. There is a generalized sense that very little respect is to be had, and therefore everyone competes to get what affirmation he can of the little that is available. The craving for respect that results gives people thin skins. Shows of deference by others can be highly soothing, contributing to a sense of security, comfort, self-confidence, and self-respect. Transgressions by others which go unanswered diminish these feelings and are believed to encourage further transgressions. Hence one must be ever vigilant against the transgressions of others or even *appearing* as if transgressions will be tolerated. Among young people, whose sense of self-esteem is particularly vulnerable, there is an especially heightened concern with being disrespected. Many inner-city young men in particular crave respect to such a degree that they will risk their lives to attain and maintain it.

The issue of respect is thus closely tied to whether a person has an inclination to be violent, even as a victim. In the wider society people may not feel required to retaliate physically after an attack, even though they are aware that they have been degraded or taken advantage of. They may feel a great need to defend themselves *during* an attack, or to behave in such a way as to deter aggression (middle-class people certainly can and do become victims of street-oriented youths), but they are much more likely than street-oriented people to feel that they can walk away from a possible altercation with their self-esteem intact. Some people may even have the strength of character to flee, without any thought that their self-respect or esteem will be diminished.

In impoverished inner-city black communities, however,

particularly among young males and perhaps increasingly among females, such flight would be extremely difficult. To run away would likely leave one’s self-esteem in tatters. Hence people often feel constrained not only to stand up and at least attempt to resist during an assault but also to “pay back”—to seek revenge—after a successful assault on their person. This may include going to get a weapon or even getting relatives involved. Their very identity and self-respect, their honor, is often intricately tied up with the way they perform on the streets during and after such encounters. This outlook reflects the circumscribed opportunities of the inner-city poor. Generally people outside the ghetto have other ways of gaining status and regard, and thus do not feel so dependent on such physical displays.

BY TRIAL OF MANHOOD

ON the street, among males these concerns about things and identity have come to be expressed in the concept of “manhood.” Manhood in the inner city means taking the prerogatives of men with respect to strangers, other men, and women—being distinguished as a man. It implies physicality and a certain ruthlessness. Regard and respect are associated with this concept in large part because of its practical application: if others have little or no regard for a person’s manhood, his very life and those of his loved ones could be in jeopardy. But there is a chicken-and-egg aspect to this situation: one’s physical safety is more likely to be jeopardized in public *because* manhood is associated with respect. In other words, an existential link has been created between the idea of manhood and one’s self-esteem, so that it has become hard to say which is primary. For many inner-city youths, manhood and respect are flip sides of the same coin; physical and psychological well-being are inseparable, and both require a sense of control, of being in charge.

The operating assumption is that a man, especially a real man, knows what other men know—the code of the streets. And if one is not a real man, one is somehow diminished as a person, and there are certain valued things one simply does not deserve. There is thus believed to be a certain justice to the code, since it is considered that everyone has the opportunity to know it. Implicit in this is that everybody is held responsible for being familiar with the code. If the victim of a mugging, for example, does not know the code and so responds “wrong,” the perpetrator may feel justified even in killing him and may feel no remorse. He may think, “Too bad, but it’s his fault. He should have known better.”

So when a person ventures outside, he must adopt the code—a kind of shield, really—to prevent others from “messing with” him. In these circumstances it is easy for



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people to think they are being tried or tested by others even when this is not the case. For it is sensed that something extremely valuable is at stake in every interaction, and people are encouraged to rise to the occasion, particularly with strangers. For people who are unfamiliar with the code—generally people who live outside the inner city—the concern with respect in the most ordinary interactions can be frightening and incomprehensible. But for those who are invested in the code, the clear object of their demeanor is to discourage strangers from even thinking about testing their manhood. And the sense of power that attends the ability to deter others can be alluring even to those who know the code without being heavily invested in it—the decent inner-city youths. Thus a boy who has been leading a basically decent life can, in trying circumstances, suddenly resort to deadly force.

Central to the issue of manhood is the widespread belief that one of the most effective ways of gaining respect is to manifest “nerve.” Nerve is shown when one takes another person’s possessions (the more valuable the better), “messes with” someone’s woman, throws the first punch, “gets in someone’s face,” or pulls a trigger. Its proper display helps on the spot to check others who would violate one’s person and also helps to build a reputation that works to prevent future challenges. But since such a show of nerve is a forceful expression of disrespect toward the person on the receiving end, the victim may be greatly offended and seek to retaliate with equal or greater force. A display of nerve, therefore, can easily provoke a life-threatening response, and the background knowledge of that possibility has often been incorporated into the concept of nerve.

True nerve exposes a lack of fear of dying. Many feel that it is acceptable to risk dying over the principle of respect. In fact, among the hard-core street-oriented, the clear risk of violent death may be preferable to being “dissed” by another. The youths who have internalized this attitude and convincingly display it in their public bearing are among the most threatening people of all, for it is commonly assumed that they fear no man. As the people of the community say, “They are the baddest dudes on the street.” They often lead an existential life that may acquire meaning only when they are faced with the possibility of imminent death. Not to be afraid to die is by implication to have few compunctions about taking another’s life. Not to be afraid to die is the quid pro quo of being able to take somebody else’s life—for the right reasons, if the situation demands it. When others believe this is one’s position, it gives one a real sense of power on the streets. Such credibility is what many inner-city youths strive to achieve, whether they are decent or street-oriented, both because of its practical defensive value and because of the positive way it makes them feel about themselves. The difference between the decent and the street-oriented youth is often that the decent youth makes a conscious decision to appear tough and manly; in another setting—

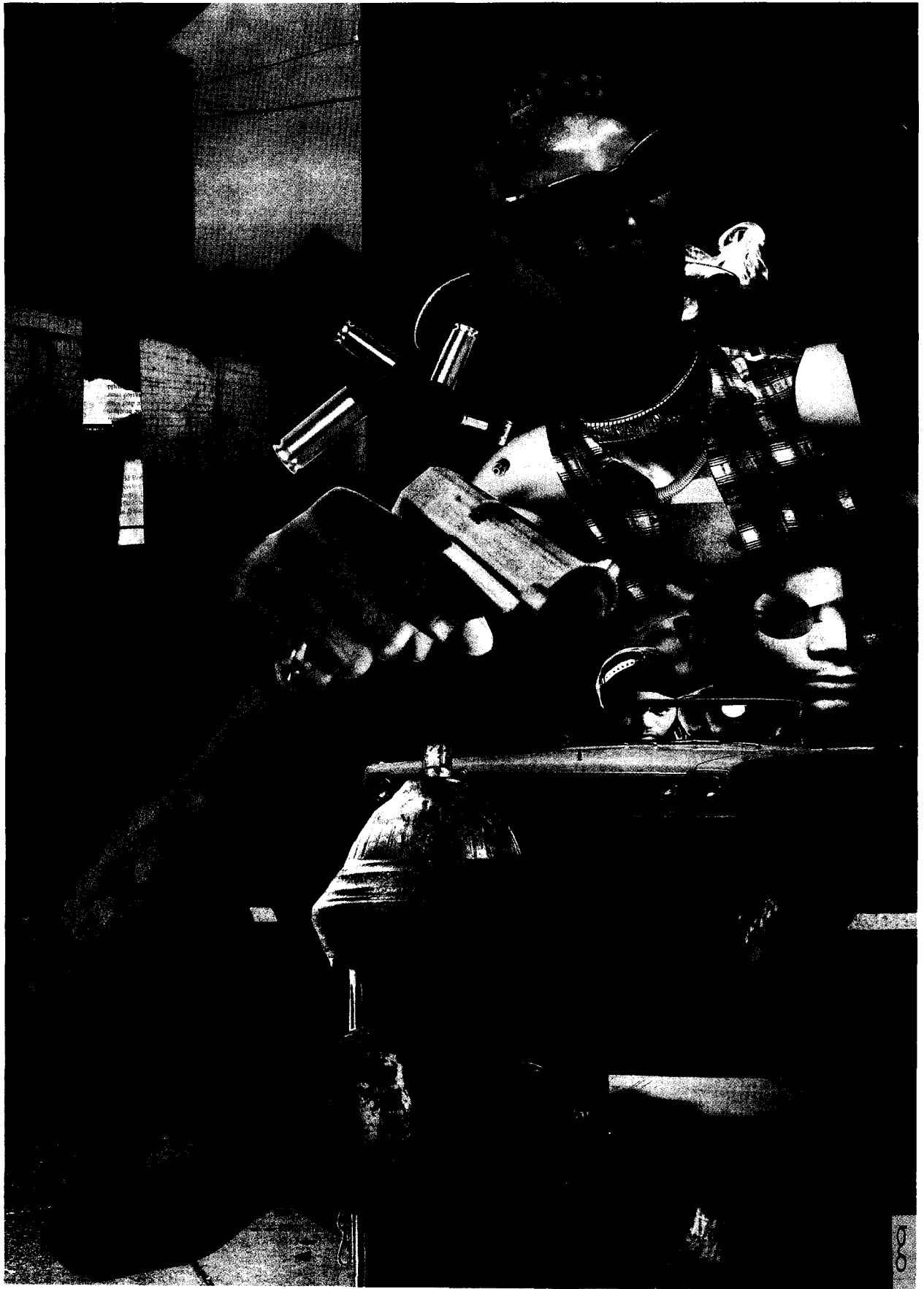
with teachers, say, or at his part-time job—he can be polite and deferential. The street-oriented youth, on the other hand, has made the concept of manhood a part of his very identity; he has difficulty manipulating it—it often controls him.

GIRLS AND BOYS

INCREASINGLY, teenage girls are mimicking the boys and trying to have their own version of “manhood.” Their goal is the same—to get respect, to be recognized as capable of setting or maintaining a certain standard. They try to achieve this end in the ways that have been established by the boys, including posturing, abusive language, and the use of violence to resolve disputes, but the issues for the girls are different. Although conflicts over turf and status exist among the girls, the majority of disputes seem rooted in assessments of beauty (which girl in a group is “the cutest”), competition over boyfriends, and attempts to regulate other people’s knowledge of and opinions about a girl’s behavior or that of someone close to her, especially her mother.

A major cause of conflicts among girls is “he say, she say.” This practice begins in the early school years and continues through high school. It occurs when “people,” particularly girls, talk about others, thus putting their “business in the streets.” Usually one girl will say something negative about another in the group, most often behind the person’s back. The remark will then get back to the person talked about. She may retaliate or her friends may feel required to “take up for” her. In essence this is a form of group gossiping in which individuals are negatively assessed and evaluated. As with much gossip, the things said may or may not be true, but the point is that such imputations can cast aspersions on a person’s good name. The accused is required to defend herself against the slander, which can result in arguments and fights, often over little of real substance. Here again is the problem of low self-esteem, which encourages youngsters to be highly sensitive to slights and to be vulnerable to feeling easily “dissed.” To avenge the dissing, a fight is usually necessary.

Because boys are believed to control violence, girls tend to defer to them in situations of conflict. Often if a girl is attacked or feels slighted, she will get a brother, uncle, or cousin to do her fighting for her. Increasingly, however, girls are doing their own fighting and are even asking their male relatives to teach them how to fight. Some girls form groups that attack other girls or take things from them. A hard-core segment of inner-city girls inclined toward violence seems to be developing. As one thirteen-year-old girl in a detention center for youths who have committed violent acts told me, “To get people to leave you alone, you gotta fight. Talking don’t always get you out of stuff.” One major difference between girls and boys: girls rarely use guns. Their fights are therefore not life-or-death struggles. Girls are not often willing to put their lives on the line for “manhood.” The ultimate form of respect on the male-dominated inner-city street is thus reserved for men.



DRIVE-BY

"GOING FOR BAD"

IN the most fearsome youths such a cavalier attitude toward death grows out of a very limited view of life. Many are uncertain about how long they are going to live and believe they could die violently at any time. They accept this fate; they live on the edge. Their manner conveys the message that nothing intimidates them; whatever turn the encounter takes, they maintain their attack—rather like a pit bull, whose spirit many such boys admire. The demonstration of such tenacity "shows heart" and earns their respect.

This fearlessness has implications for law enforcement. Many street-oriented boys are much more concerned about the threat of "justice" at the hands of a peer than at the hands of the police. Moreover, many feel not only that they have little to lose by going to prison but that they have something to gain. The toughening-up one experiences in prison can actually enhance one's reputation on the streets. Hence the system loses influence over the hard core who are without jobs, with little perceptible stake in the system. If mainstream society has done nothing *for* them, they counter by making sure it can do nothing *to* them.

At the same time, however, a competing view maintains that true nerve consists in backing down, walking away from a fight, and going on with one's business. One fights only in self-defense. This view emerges from the decent philosophy that life is precious, and it is an important part of the socialization process common in decent homes. It discourages violence as the primary means of resolving disputes and encourages youngsters to accept nonviolence and talk as confrontational strategies. But "if the deal goes down," self-defense is greatly encouraged. When there is enough positive support for this orientation, either in the home or among one's peers, then nonviolence has a chance to prevail. But it prevails at the cost of relinquishing a claim to being bad and tough, and therefore sets a young person up as at the very least alienated from street-oriented peers and quite possibly a target of derision or even violence.

Although the nonviolent orientation rarely overcomes the impulse to strike back in an encounter, it does introduce a certain confusion and so can prompt a measure of soul-searching, or even profound ambivalence. Did the person back down with his respect intact or did he back down only to be judged a "punk"—a person lacking manhood? Should he or she have acted? Should he or she have hit the other person in the mouth? These questions beset many young men and women during public confrontations. What is the "right" thing to do? In the quest for honor, respect, and local status—which few young people are uninterested in—common sense most often prevails, which leads many to opt for the tough approach, enacting their own particular versions of the display of nerve. The presentation of oneself as rough and tough is very often quite acceptable until one is tested. And then that presentation may help the person pass the test,

because it will cause fewer questions to be asked about what he did and why. It is hard for a person to explain why he lost the fight or why he backed down. Hence many will strive to appear to "go for bad," while hoping they will never be tested. But when they are tested, the outcome of the situation may quickly be out of their hands, as they become wrapped up in the circumstances of the moment.

AN OPPOSITIONAL CULTURE

THE attitudes of the wider society are deeply implicated in the code of the streets. Most people in inner-city communities are not totally invested in the code, but the significant minority of hard-core street youths who are have to maintain the code in order to establish reputations, because they have—or feel they have—few other ways to assert themselves. For these young people the standards of the street code are the only game in town. The extent to which some children—particularly those who through upbringing have become most alienated and those lacking in strong and conventional social support—experience, feel, and internalize racist rejection and contempt from mainstream society may strongly encourage them to express contempt for the more conventional society in turn. In dealing with this contempt and rejection, some youngsters will consciously invest themselves and their considerable mental resources in what amounts to an oppositional culture to preserve themselves and their self-respect. Once they do, any respect they might be able to garner in the wider system pales in comparison with the respect available in the local system; thus they often lose interest in even attempting to negotiate the mainstream system.

At the same time, many less alienated young blacks have assumed a street-oriented demeanor as a way of expressing their blackness while really embracing a much more moderate way of life; they, too, want a nonviolent setting in which to live and raise a family. These decent people are trying hard to be part of the mainstream culture, but the racism, real and perceived, that they encounter helps to legitimate the oppositional culture. And so on occasion they adopt street behavior. In fact, depending on the demands of the situation, many people in the community slip back and forth between decent and street behavior.

A vicious cycle has thus been formed. The hopelessness and alienation many young inner-city black men and women feel, largely as a result of endemic joblessness and persistent racism, fuels the violence they engage in. This violence serves to confirm the negative feelings many whites and some middle-class blacks harbor toward the ghetto poor, further legitimating the oppositional culture and the code of the streets in the eyes of many poor young blacks. Unless this cycle is broken, attitudes on both sides will become increasingly entrenched, and the violence, which claims victims black and white, poor and affluent, will only escalate. ☛

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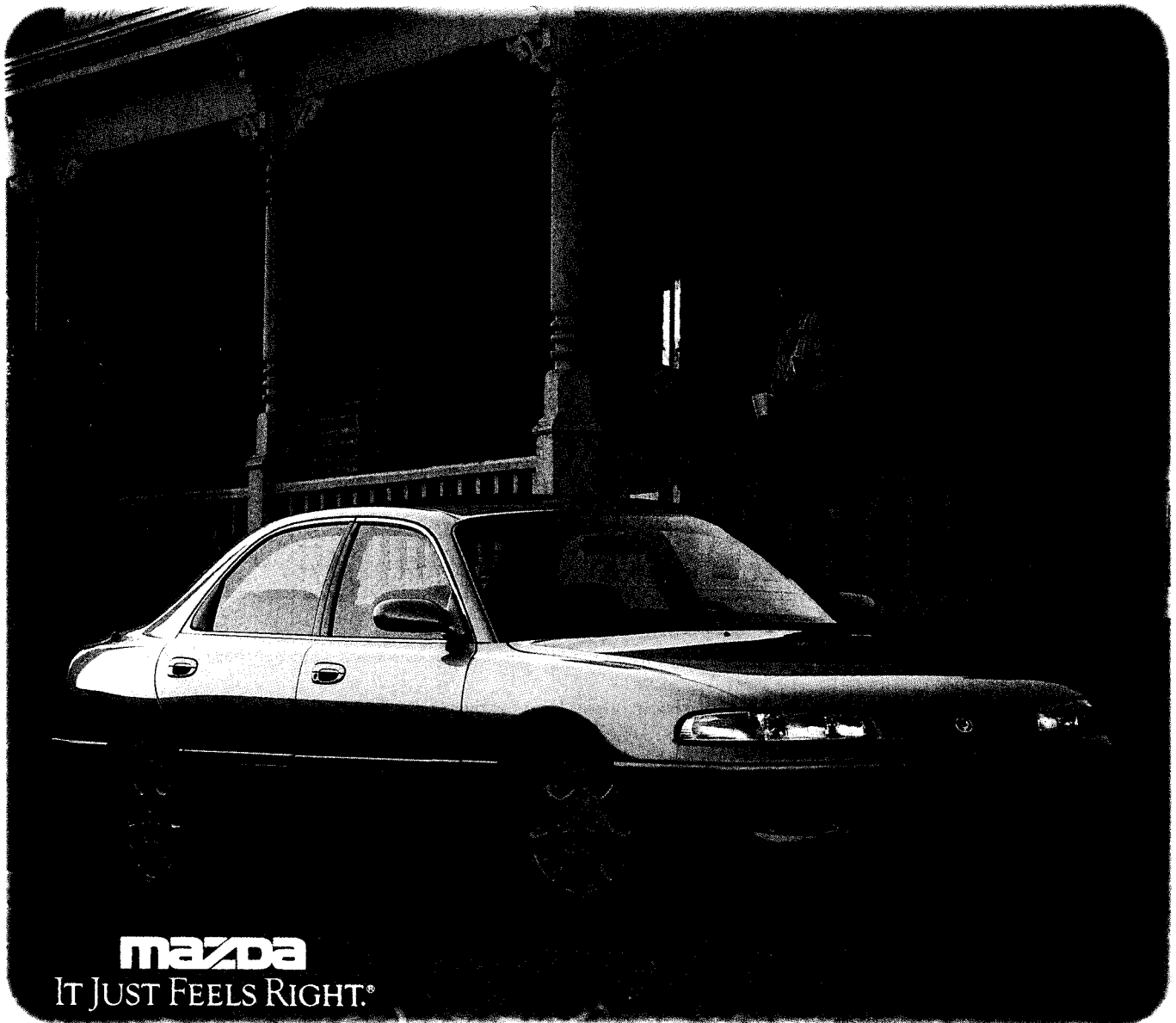
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Min

by REBECCA LEE

I SAT on a metal folding chair, facing the five members of the Student-Faculty Relations Committee—one dean, two professors, and two students. Sunshine poured in. Carved in the wall above their heads were the words “*Animus non integritatem sed facinus cupit*,” meaning “The heart wills not purity but adventure.”

Despite the sun, it was snowing outside—big lotus flakes. This was early February, 1989, not a good year for romance. At least not in American universities.

Even after all those years of feminist theory here she was, asking for criteria by which she should judge other women, hoping to find a suitable wife for her friend

a seminar on Rilke, was an elegant, vaguely licentious man, who I thought exuded longing for all things, not merely his female students. Truthfully, I was embarrassed to be here. I had been subpoenaed along with eleven other women, most of whom had complex stories to tell about Harrison. But he

“Would you describe your relationship with Professor Harrison as *intimate*, then?” This was the dean, a large, gentle man.

“Perhaps intimate, yes,” I said. Harrison, with whom I spent every Tuesday and Thursday in

had made only a couple of standard passes at me. And I might have fallen for them had I not known he made passes regularly, almost randomly. His mistake with me, I admit, was less ethical than strategic.

"Would you describe Professor Harrison's attentions as inappropriate?" asked Catherine Stole, a tall, cool woman. The previous semester I had attended her class on feminist literary theory.

"Somewhat inappropriate, yes," I said, "but not offensive."

"Not offensive?" She raised her eyebrows and looked at me disapprovingly, as if she were failing me retroactively. I stared back, maintaining silently that there was a place, even if just a thin window, where inappropriate and offensive did not intersect.

"I would have been flattered," said Min Leung, one of the students on the committee. He was an incredibly handsome man with a wide, bronze face, and he spoke happily, as if this were a discussion, as if we were all just chatting. Everybody looked at him. He smiled and shrugged.

I SAW Min again a week later, in the grocery store, tossing a tomato in the air. "One of the harassment girls," he said. "Hello. I forget your name."

"Sarah Johnson," I said. "And you are Min Leung."

"Yes," he said. We shook hands.

"It must have been quite dull to sit through all that," I said.

"Oh, no," he said. "It was fascinating."

"Fascinating?"

"Where I am from, to be desired is a great honor. In fact, the one who is desired feels immense gratitude, particularly if the one who desires is in a position of authority. The one who is desired showers the one who desires with gifts, sometimes for many years. Out of gratitude."

I was eating green grapes from a plastic bag. I smiled as I tried to imagine all of us carrying gifts to Harrison's home, year after year.

NOTHING official happened to Harrison, but as winter passed into spring, I did notice him attempt to gaze across our classroom with a lesser trace of desire in his pale blue eyes. Meanwhile, outside the windows, our rolling religious campus gathered heat and moisture until it suddenly grew everywhere a velvety green grass. In the midst of the warm, humid spring Min and I became excellent and permanent friends.

Min was a rare man. His personality was composed of both arrogance and a gentle gratitude. He wore the same thing every day: Levi's, a white button-down shirt, and a black leather jacket. He had a motorcycle, and most evenings after dinner we went for long rides, into the dusky, slopy countryside of southern Montana. We usually ended up at the cliffs, about a half-hour ride from campus.

One of these nights, as we sat on a granite cliff, a sad line of cows moved in among the waters below us. The big bells around their necks rang. The sun was slung low in the distance. "I will miss this," Min said. He pulled a couple of beers out of his backpack and gave me one. "And you?" he said, smiling through the dark. "What will you do without me?"

"Could you stay the summer at least?"

He shook his head. "My father," he said.

I nodded. Min's father had found Min a job in his office that summer, and I knew, as well, that Min was worried about his father. A couple of months earlier, in mid-March, he had shown me an article in *The New York Times* which included a quotation from his father, Albert Leung. The quotation was brief and lyrical, and it carried the same sort of kindness and sadness that I would later discover in Albert himself: "We regret, as a colony, our inability to overcome compassion fatigue."

Min's father had been recommended by Margaret Thatcher to Hong Kong's Legislative Council in 1984. He worked in the council department that handled refugees arriving in Hong Kong. Most were Vietnamese, a group that had been arriving steadily since the fall of Saigon, in 1975. In the past couple of years, however, the numbers of refugees streaming in had risen sharply, causing a severe crisis.

A couple of times I had watched Min answer the phone when his father called. Min would shout a warm "*Ni hao!*" into the phone, and then fall silent. He would end the conversation in a low, staccato Cantonese.

"Sarah," Min said suddenly. "Why don't you come with me?"

I shook my head. "I'd love to, but I'm broke. Next summer, maybe."

"Next summer I'll be married."

I blinked. "You're engaged?"

"Not yet. It will be arranged."

"An arranged marriage? No kidding? That's depressing, Min."

"Not necessarily."

"What if you don't like her?"

"Then I won't marry her. It only means that somebody will sift through the possibilities for me, with my best interests at heart."

"And whom do you trust to do this?"

"Officially the father decides; unofficially the mother. But since my mother is dead, the unofficial screening job has fallen to my father. He's quite nervous about it."

"I guess. What a job."

Min sat down. "Sarah, listen, my father will pay for your flight."

"I'd feel funny taking your father's money."

"Then he'll give you a job. With me."

"I'm not really qualified to organize refugee relief."

"Well, who is?" he said, shrugging and grinning. "So it's

settled, then?" He leaned forward to kiss my cheek. His face was beautiful, with one thick vein running down his forehead, around his left eye.

"Maybe," I said, and then we sat silent for a while, Min's foot drumming a little beat in the dirt. I said, "Min, I can't believe that."

"What?"

"That your marriage will be arranged. Don't you believe in desire?"

"Of course. My grandparents went the length of China with everything they owned on their backs on the basis of nothing but desire. But I can't imagine them looking to *create* desire in their relationship. Their lives were saturated with desire; they were looking to carefully, intelligently *slake* it. You see?" He tipped back his head and took a long swallow of beer. Behind him the orange sun had lit the length of the horizon, like wildfire.

"Anyway," he said, "romance bores me." He raised his head regally, and waved his hand as if flicking something away. Then he smiled at me, paused a few moments, and said, "You will love my city."

OUR route was Missoula to L. A. and then west over the Pacific to Hong Kong. We went Northwest first class—huge, plush chairs, bowls of sherbet on china followed by tea every couple of hours. Liquor was free, so Min and I drank it liberally. Over the course of that night, including our long stopover in Seoul, we became tipsy and sober again three times as we drifted in and out of daylight.

I was sure we would tear off the tips of the buildings as we descended straight into the heart of Hong Kong. Landing was intensely exotic, like swiftly entering a jewel, a ruby.

Albert was there to meet us. As soon as Min saw his father, he grabbed my hand and we rushed through the crowd. When Albert and Min hugged each other, I noticed that Albert was hugging with only one arm. The other was slack at his side. He'd apparently had a stroke.

Min pulled back. "Dad," he said, "are you all right?"

"Oh, yes, only a small accident. It's healing rapidly." He continued to pat Min on the back as he turned to me. "And you must be Sarah. I'm always honored to meet a friend of my son's."

"Thank you," I said. "Thank you for inviting me."

Moments later I was in the soft leather back seat of Albert's silver-blue Jaguar, passing under the electric canopy of Nathan Road, breathing in the scent of the city, which was—in equal parts—diesel exhaust, rank mango from the pyramids stacked on the sidewalks, and the keen salty air that rose off the Pacific.

We passed through the tunnel to Hong Kong Island and drove down a quiet street lined with inverted pines, stopping at a dark-blue, turreted restaurant. Over dinner I discovered

that Albert, like Min, was a curious, gracious man, with a talent for asking personal questions that one might want to answer. Albert and Min got along well. As they talked, I studied their faces.

They looked alike, though racially they were obviously not identical. Albert, I knew, was pure Chinese. His family had once been refugees to Hong Kong from Manchouli, a northern city in Manchuria province, close to both Mongolia and the Soviet Union. Min's mother had been from a tiny mountain town in the Himalayas, above Nepal. I wondered how that would be, to be a father and to stare across a table, through the crackling candlelight, and see your own face, younger, broadened and transformed by both time and race. How interesting it would be to see the future that precisely; how lovely.

Albert lived in Kowloon, which is on the mainland, so we passed back and began our steady climb upward, out of the lit city, into a dark, densely wooded area on the periphery called Clear Water. The house was green and sprawling, overlooking a small bay of the South China Sea.

All around us rose small, jagged mountains. In the dark they looked alive, like giant blackbirds, staring down at their one treasure—the little sapphire bay.

MIN and I had a week before we began our jobs. We set out the first morning in Albert's Jaguar. Once downtown, we roamed on foot. The first street we stepped into was steep and crooked, with emerald and gold cobblestones, and lined with small stands selling slices of snake to eat, and the bodies of fish that supposedly had been drawn from the ocean decades ago, in the 1950s. This was a delicacy, and if one ate it carefully, it would give a specific sort of knowledge, the fish-seller said, knowledge that all desire is one day satisfied. "Why?" Min asked.

"Why?" The man raised his eyebrows.

"Why will this fish give us this knowledge?"

"Because a fish's desire is to be eaten, and this fish has waited all these years." He seemed to have made this up on the spot.

"Seems counterintuitive," Min said.

The man looked annoyed with us, so we moved on. I carried the fish. It did have a sort of sad, waiting look to it. I took a bite. The texture was webby, bristly. It had a layer of crystalline, almost invisible salt, and my throat tightened against it.

"Mmm," I said to Min. "It's working already. Have a bite."

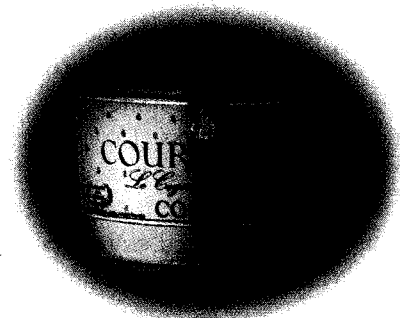
Min took a bite, and made a gagging noise. We sucked on it for a while, until an incredible thirst overtook us both. I didn't want to throw it out uneaten, though, in case what the fish-seller had said was true. "Wrap it up," Min said. "Send it to your sad Mr. Harrison. He'll eat it." I smiled, and eventually set it down in the gutter for a stray cat.

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We passed into the next street, which was, suddenly, a thoroughfare lined with marble-and-glass skyscrapers. The rest of the week would pass exactly like this—each street a small, soft shock. Because I was from the prairies, a city built on hills struck me as voluptuous, revealing. Beyond a row of gray shanties I could see a beautiful pink mansion on a hill, and beyond that another hill with a dark Catholic crucifix rising from it, and beyond that Hindu monks crawling up a slope, tilling a small plot of berries. And every day I would see, here and there, the long silver barracks of the refugee camps, shining and surrounded by barbed wire.

I read in the *Hong Kong Standard* that Amnesty International had now declared conditions in the camps—erupting sewers, severe malnutrition, scant medical care—“deplorable.” Relief groups in the United States also criticized the British and Hong Kong governments, calling the camps “odious.” Even famously neutral Canada joined in. And when one of Margaret Thatcher’s attachés, the toady Mr. Olson, proposed a plan to send back some of the refugees as a message to other Vietnamese not to attempt the journey, the Pope, from his flowery balcony above Saint Peter’s, declared repatriation in this case “an assault on human dignity.”

DURING that first week we went to the Wednesday-night races. We ate dinner in a glassy booth high above the track. It jutted out far above the bleachers and seemed to float there, unattached to anything. It was the British club. We sat at a table with one of Albert’s colleagues, a man named Kingsley, and his silent wife. He talked about the Vietnamese all night. “I do find it best,” he said at one point, “that we’ve decided to send them back.”

“We haven’t decided that,” Albert said. “In fact, I’m sure it won’t happen. If we send them back, some will surely be hurt.”

“No, no. We’ll get the Viet government to agree not to touch them.”

“The whole world is already against us. Even the Americans.”

“Let me tell you something about the Americans,” Kingsley said. “The only thing to remember is that, God bless them, they are vulgarians. The only thing they do reasonably well is entertain. They make amusing movies that the adult world indulges in for a few moments after dinner. But their political ideas? Worthless. They sympathize with the bastards? We have forty-seven thousand of them washing up on our shore, and the Americans have offered to take two hundred of them.” He looked at me. His face was covered in bristly gray hair. “Sorry,” he said to me. Later, when some bagpipe music came over the loudspeaker, Kingsley leaned back and I thought he might weep.

After dinner the betting began. In the little hovering booth

the very idea of betting seemed conceptual. These were extremely wealthy people, and money moved through the room as if it were oxygen, or time—in such abundance that it was no longer visible.

Later Min and I took the shaky elevator to the ground level. There I saw money. People carried it crumpled in their hands. The cement floor was littered with slips of paper. We watched the end of a race through an opening in the bleachers. From above, the horses had seemed to move effortlessly, but from here I could see the froth at their mouths, and their eyes filling with tears as they stepped off the track.

“Can you believe that Kingsley guy?” Min said, loosening his bow tie. Bells rang, marking the start of another race. Somebody released a bagful of white birds into the air, for luck.

ON Monday, I discovered that Min’s job would be downtown, at the office, but mine would be in the house. Early that morning I followed Albert as he limped through a series of hallways and up some stairs, until we were walking down a long moss-green hallway. At the end of it Albert opened a large door and introduced me to my office. It had vaulted ceilings and enormous windows that looked out over the Pacific. The sun fell in as if it were aimed directly at this room, which contained a large desk, gilded, with tiny rubies encrusted at its edges. I smiled at this room, so pleasant and dramatic simultaneously. “It’s beautiful, Albert,” I said. “It’s so generous. I hope I won’t disappoint you.”

“Impossible,” he said. “When Min called me from America, he said he had found a woman as serious and as beautiful as his mother. I was skeptical at first, but I see you are a remarkable woman.”

I was silent at this. I had never received such a grand compliment, and I was deeply flattered. “Thank you,” I finally said.

“Have a seat,” he said, walking over to the desk and pulling out a chair, which was upholstered and intricately carved. I sat down. Albert sat on the edge of the desk. “As you know,” he said, “Min will be married in this next year.”

“That soon?” I said.

“Yes.”

“Has his wife been selected?”

“No. That is where you come in. You will be choosing the wife.”

“Me?”

“Yes.”

“Albert, I am honored, I can’t tell you how honored, but I’m really not qualified to do that. I mean, after all, I’m a foreigner here.”

“You are his best friend. Who better to discover a wife?”

“Well, Min, for one.”

“Min is a fool in these matters, as was I, before Lada.”

"What if I choose the wrong person?"

"It's not that simple. You will actually choose a woman, and I will approve her, and then Min will meet her. He will not be required to marry her. We have all summer before you return to America, so there is plenty of time to make this decision. It must be somebody the entire family agrees upon, and since you are Lada's eyes for now, your vote will count to the same degree that hers would if she were alive."

"I don't know," I said, shaking my head.

Albert looked worried. "Of course, Sarah, if you prefer not to do this, that is fine. Please stay as our guest anyway. I do not want to drive you away with this request. I want you to be happy here."

This broke my heart. "Oh, I am," I said. "Of course I will be pleased to help you. I just hope I won't disappoint you."

"That is quite impossible," he said.

"Well, then," I said, "when should I start?"

"Now would be perfect. The applications are in the desk."

"Applications?"

"Yes. Letters and photos of different women. Some have recommended themselves; others have been recommended by their parents

or friends. You will look at those, and narrow the field to perhaps fifty or one hundred that you can interview."

"What about criteria?" I asked, and winced. All those years of feminist theory had led me here, to this little red-gem room, swathed in sunlight, me sitting at a desk, asking about the criteria by which I should judge other women. Hands, eyes, heart.

"I trust your instinct. The only thing I ask is that you provide a description of each woman after you meet her."

"All right."

"My own mother, Min's grandmother, sat at this same desk and determined that I would marry Lada. Her files are still in that cabinet. I've had them translated so that you can look through them."

"All right. Thank you."

"No," he said, "thank you, Sarah." He closed the door behind him.

I opened the large drawer to my left. Inside were stacks and stacks of letters. Most had a photograph clipped to them. I picked up the first one. The woman had a friendly, shy smile, and curious eyes. I thought she looked smart. I wondered briefly if this would be the one, right here. What a coincidence that would be. I read her letter. *I am a chemistry student in Beijing. I have moments of beauty. I will work, if that is your wish, or not, if it isn't.*

Nah, I thought, too humble for Min. I placed her applica-

tion on a small table behind me, which became from that moment on the place for discarded applications. As I reached to pick up the second application, I was suddenly horrified that I had slipped into this job so easily. I stood up and went over to inspect the cabinet where Min's grandmother's notes were kept. They were neatly organized. On the front of each woman's file was Min's grandmother's assessment. She wrote in characters, and underneath, in parenthesis, somebody had translated them into English for me.

About the first woman the grandmother had written, "No, looks out corner of eyes, suspicious and addicted to finding fault."

"Ouch," I said, flipping to the next file. Tough old broad, that grandmother. The next one said, "Possibility—Midnight-black hair, walk is like a leopard's, carnal desires strong." The next few were all rejections: "Silly, without dignity, spoils everything she touches." "Monkey-woman, scurries through the day, loves confusion." And under one name Min's grandmother had written only "Pleases no one."

I skimmed them all. There must have been close to fifty. On the very bottom of the pile I found a descrip-

tion of Lada. "Is not Chinese, but of lowland Himalayas. Has no wealth, but carries purple light. Seems like cloud about to burst. Sleeps lightly, fond of gods."

EARLY that evening, before dinner, I changed into my bathing suit and climbed the several stories of the house to spread open the large metal doors that led to the roof, into the swirling, hallucinatory light of sunset. There I found Min, sitting in a stone whirlpool, his head tilted back on the ledge, half sleeping after his first day of work.

I stared at him for a while, wondering what would happen if I offered myself as the bride. But then, as I slowly slipped into the warm water, I realized that the hundreds of hours I had spent with Min had, by the mysterious alchemy of friendship, distilled out any romance, like the steam rising all around us now, leaving us pure, fast friends.

Min's eyes opened and he smiled lazily at me.

"Min," I said, "do you have any idea what my job is?"

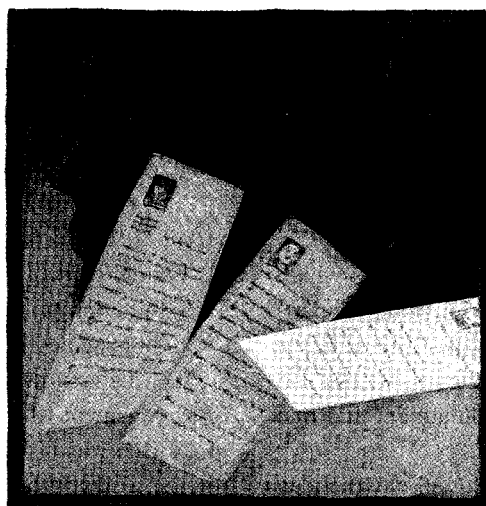
"I think so," he said.

"I'm supposed to find you a wife."

Min didn't look surprised but just lay there, a relaxed, confident grin on his face. "It's strange, isn't it, how things work out?"

"Yes," I said emphatically. "It's very strange."

My bedroom was next to Min's. Later that night, after we



had played a gentle, courteous game of Mah-Jongg with Albert, Min cried out in his sleep. I sat up straight in my bed. This was the second time that week. It was such a sad, childish yelping, and so deeply at odds with his personality, that it shocked me. I couldn't help thinking of his mother. I was seized with a sudden desire that she be alive, and that she take on this job of finding Min happiness, finding him a wife.

SOMETIME in those early weeks I first saw Rapti. I often went for walks around the neighborhood late in the afternoon. I found a little shop called Asia Foodstore at the foot of the neighborhood. It was pleasantly crowded in the afternoons, full of Filipino amahs and expats shopping after work. Rapti was an amah. When I saw her, she was carrying a very large blond baby in a cloth carrier. The baby rested on her chest, facing her.

I noticed her because she was singing a quiet syncopated song to the baby, full of clicking baby noises. She had black braids and was quite tall.

Earlier that day I had found a sheet of paper on which Min's grandmother had written her definition of the "superior woman." At the top of the page it said, "Formula for Woman, According to Dignity." The formula was "Has excellent posture, which is two thirds contentment and one third desire."

At first I thought this a bit arbitrary. But all day the idea had been passing through my mind like a mantra. I began to think, in this strange place—half kingdom, half city—that the grandmother's formula caught the entire world in its tiny

palm. *Two thirds contentment, one third desire.* Of course, I thought, as I spiraled my way through the trees to Asia Foodstore, that is the composition of the world. And so when I saw Rapti walking up and down the aisles, singing contentedly to the baby, letting him reach for and touch every last thing in the store, she seemed, suddenly, to embody this formula.

I ran into her almost every day after that, going up or down the hills. We nodded to each other at first, and later had small conversations. I discovered that she worked for a Canadian couple, toy-makers, who lived a block away from Min. They worked during the day, and left their little baby, Jack, with Rapti. "He is my best friend," Rapti said, removing her left braid from his mouth. He liked to chew on her braids whenever he could.

When I told Rapti that I was staying with the Leung family, she frowned. "Really?" she said.

"Why do you frown?"

"I hear a lot about them."

"Yes. This is a hard time for Mr. Leung and Min, his son."

"I know who Min is," she said. "I guess I don't feel too sorry for them. I feel more sorry for the Vietnamese."

I didn't say anything. I didn't want to quarrel with her.

Over the next month I discovered that she was the leader of a movement to unionize all the amahs from the Philippines. She was also a sort of unofficial consultant to other foreign-worker groups in Hong Kong. Often when I saw her, she and the baby had returned from a rally downtown or a protest outside the Regent. They returned by bus in the late afternoon to shop at Asia and then walk with me up the hill. The baby often leaned back in the pouch and stared up at Rapti as she talked. I liked to imagine that baby's future memories. The Canadian couple were planning on moving back home in a year, where the baby would grow up on some gentle, ordinary plain, in Alberta or Saskatchewan, and have exhilarating dreams of fantastic Asia, its red setting sun and soaring ginkgo trees, and of Rapti, too, her soft, intelligent voice, her tantalizing blue-black braids floating above.

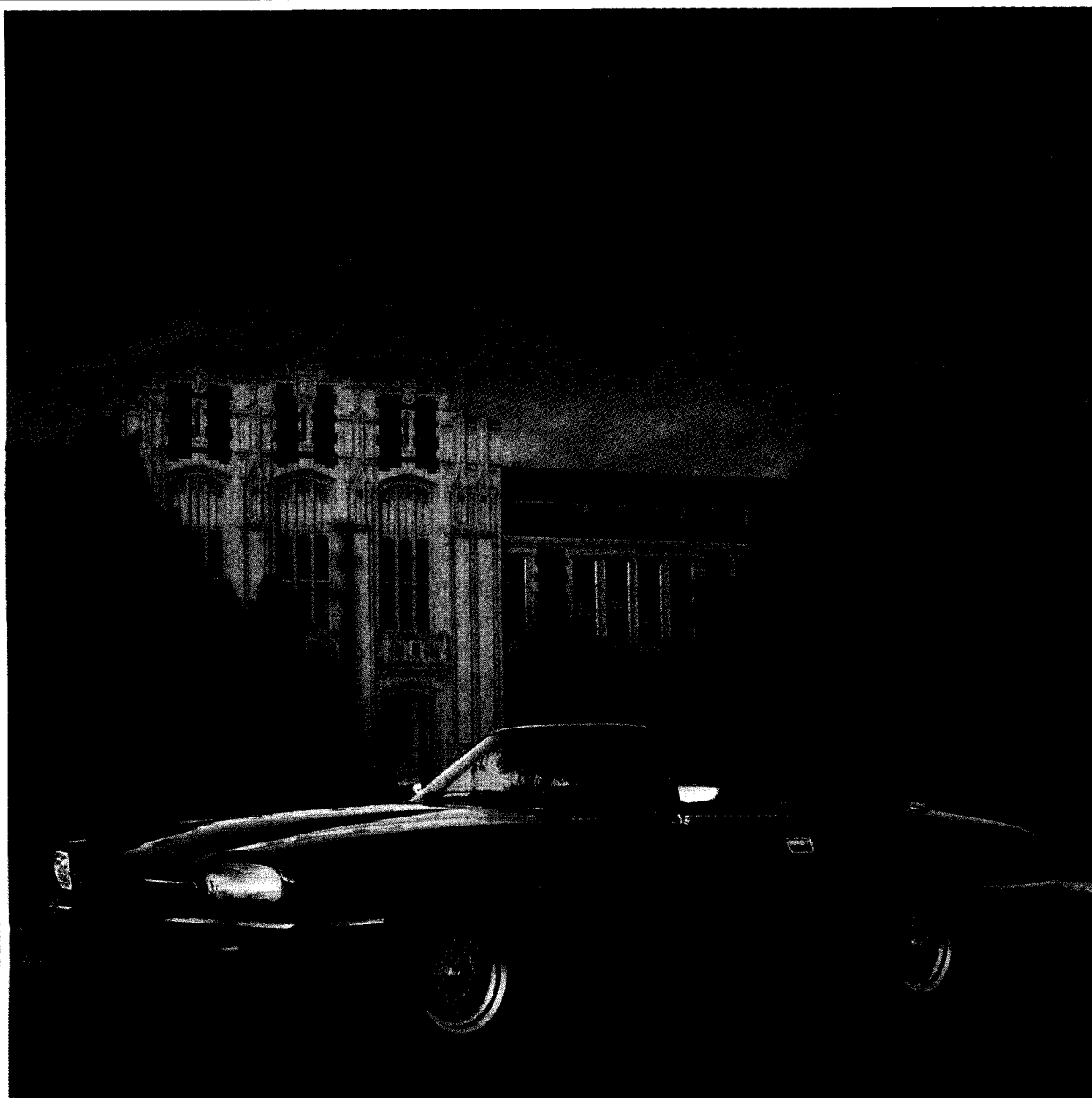
POST NATAL

And now begins the willed unstitching,
the present I promised myself
those last three months
to transform maternity tents
in harvest colors (October pumpkin, giant squash)
into dusting cloths, and so complete
the metaphor. Though dust
to dust doesn't seem quite apt, given
the viscous nature of origin since Eve,
it nevertheless satisfies—as I swirl
the orange and yellow flags—to recognize
in the weekly task
how love begins in expectancy,
how its arrival lasts.

—LYNNE MCMAHON

AS the days passed, I slowly narrowed the list of candidates to a hundred that I would interview. I had tried to create different methods by which to sift fairly through the applications, but none was successful. Eventually I worked entirely by instinct, or, more accurately, by capricious reasoning—the tilt of her handwriting; the beauty of her name, *Lily Chen*, *Mei-Mei Fai*; or even an elaborate hairstyle that I wanted to see in person.

Aside from this impossible task, I began to love my summer in Hong Kong. What had made me such a poor traveler in the past, getting no farther than Canada and once, briefly, Mexico, and disliking even that, was that I had a love of repetition and schedule. Perfect days, for me, began with identical food and drink and activity; not until dusk would I devel-



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op the restlessness that is supposed to mark people in their twenties, the desire for the day to flower, to reveal something or somebody never imagined. So in Hong Kong each weekday morning I went to the roof, sat in the whirlpool with Min, drank coffee as the sun exploded over the mountains, read the previous day's *New York Times* and the present day's *Hong Kong Standard*. We listened to the BBC at eight-thirty, and when Min left for work with his father, I retired to my office to do my strange work. At noon I ate one cucumber sandwich, one bag of squid chips, and one pomelo. Then I worked until two o'clock. I spent the afternoons swimming in the pool, reading, buying groceries down at Asia with Rapti.

Each night, though, was different from the last—horse races, restaurants that seemed carved out of pure blocks of ivory or bronze, meals of pastel lobsters as large as infants, psychedelic fireworks on the harbor. We also went to many gritty movies that were shot locally—*Hong Kong Gigolo*, *Warrior of the Harbor*—where in every single scene, even the most deeply romantic ones, something would explode.

But my favorite thing to do at night was to take a boat ride to the island Lantau, where we would hike in the dark through the jungle to a small monastery built on stone. There they served us a thin soup that looked like water but tasted like the ocean—salty, warm, the smell a hint that every creature in the world—eel, fish, lizard, horse, human being—had at one time passed through it.

ALL summer we heard murmurs that the Hong Kong government, despite internal dissent, was actually going to attempt to repatriate some of the Vietnamese. The first group, we heard, would be sent back to Hanoi secretly and suddenly, in order to avoid riots. They would be awakened in the middle of the night and forced onto a boat or a plane.

The Vietnamese had publicly announced that they would use their homemade weapons against anybody who came for them. Relief workers and guards inside the camps reported that each night they fell asleep to the steady grinding sound of metal being sharpened into weapons.

One week in early July, Margaret Thatcher visited Hong Kong. The Vietnamese had asked that she come to the camps on her visit so that they could discuss their situation with her, but she had refused. Late on a Friday afternoon Albert took Min and me up in a small government jet to see what the Vietnamese had done to protest her refusal. The sky was cloudless, the sun a bright pink. We drank beer, circling, sweeping over the city. At first I didn't see it when Albert pointed, but then it caught the sun and sparkled. Along the silver roofs was spelled out in white stones, "Thatcher has no heart."

Albert shook his head sadly. From this distance you could see his entire problem mapped out. In the troubled, sun-gilded water surrounding Hong Kong hundreds of people were

bobbing in small boats, waiting, begging Albert and his colleagues to let them in. But if he did, they would be held in the crowded camps as illegal immigrants, and treated worse than prisoners.

From here repatriation might seem to be the only answer. Min asked, "Do you think we'll end up sending them back?"

"No," Albert said. "No. I couldn't live with myself if we did that."

After the plane landed, I walked behind Min and Albert across the tarmac. I didn't want to intrude on their conversation. Watching them, I was surprised again by the severity of Albert's limp. He put his arm around Min, and walked straighter. The two had a private understanding, an understanding of happiness. Each wanted the other to be happy and content, and each knew that the way to make the other happy was to be happy himself. This straining toward happiness in the midst of a difficult summer gave their home an aura of warmth and cheer, with a subtle undercurrent of sadness. Only once had I seen Albert falter in this regard. On a bright afternoon he had burst onto the roof with a letter fluttering in his hand. He handed it to Min in the whirlpool. The two men laughed and shook hands. The letter announced that they would be receiving special passports that would allow them to leave Hong Kong if things got brutal when the Chinese government took over, in 1997. Only 50,000 families would receive these. But then, while they were congratulating each other, Albert began to choke up, and eventually he cried openly. Min leaped out of the pool and stood beside his father, patting him on his back. After his father went inside, I asked, "Why is he crying?"

"He is ashamed of his privilege."

"Hmm."

"Only a man who hates his privilege can be trusted with it."

IN July, I began the interviews. Outside I could see the relentless waves of heat, but inside, cool lavender air was piped into my office. I actually enjoyed the interviews, though my method of choosing became more and more arbitrary.

A few women I could write off immediately. Some seemed too passive, others had a hostile edge, and a fair number actually asked me not to choose them, because they were doing this only to please their mothers and fathers. Most of the women I genuinely liked. One woman was so lovely that my heart skipped the moment she entered the room. One woman was unbearably funny; I met with her twice, and both times I was reduced to tears of laughter. A few were such extreme overachievers at such a young age that I interviewed them very carefully, with my own motives, looking for clues, secrets of personality. But usually my personality sketches, compared with the grandmother's, were vague and dull—"Seems nice, dignified, beautiful, articulate."

The only time I was able even to approach the grand-

mother's divination and intuition was when I described my new friend Rapti to myself. *Not Chinese*, I thought, *but Filipino. Possesses strong heart. Loves a just God, and children. Industrious. Lives in apricot light.*

RAPTI asked, a gleam in her eye, "Have you found a wife yet for your corrupt little Min?" It was close to midnight. We were sitting on a large rock on a rocky beach. Behind Asia Foodstore was a long, thin stairway that led down through the trees to the water. I often walked here late at night if Min went to bed early. Sometimes Rapti joined me. She had a small Walkman that she could play without the headphones. We'd listen to Michael Jackson over and over, and sometimes Madonna. Those two tapes, the songs on them, still have more power and melancholy for me than any music I've heard since. Huge pieces of Styrofoam continually washed up in that bay, and in the moonlight, as they rolled awkwardly through the waves, they were fluorescent and beautiful.

"You know," I said, "you should meet Min. You'd really like him."

"I'm sure I wouldn't," she said.

"Perhaps we could all just meet one day, go for a walk together."

We had waded out to this rock about an hour earlier, and the tide had risen. Dead fish floated all around, studded with silver lichen, like jewelry.

"Forget it, Sarah," she said. "Even if I agreed to meet him, which I won't, you can bet your life Min would not be interested in me."

"Why not?"

"Because the Chinese hate Filipinos, the same as they hate the Vietnamese. We're either their maids or their drivers."

"Min isn't like that," I said.

"If this Min is such an excellent man, why don't you fall in love with him yourself?" She looked at me provocatively, and then stood up to go, smoothing her skirt with her hands.

This suggestion startled me. "Rapti!" I said. "Of course I can't fall in love with him." I couldn't explain that the way I felt about Min was the same way I felt about her. I looked up at her. Her hair, not in its usual braids, whipped around. I felt a stab of longing. I liked everything about her. When she spoke, she was funny and smart. She was strong; I had seen her throw the huge baby into the air and catch him easily. And when she fell silent, as now, staring over the bay in the direction of her cluster of islands, I couldn't help wondering, and wanting to know, exactly what she was thinking.

A COUPLE of weeks later, as Min and I stood in line for a movie, I said, "Min, you would consider marrying somebody of a different nationality, wouldn't you?"

"Absolutely," he said. "I am of mixed heritage myself."

"Good," I said. "I want you to meet a friend I have made."

"A friend?"

"Rapti, the woman I told you about who works down the street?"

"The amah? The Filipino amah?"

"Yes," I said defensively.

Min had his hands in his pockets. He rocked back and forth on his heels. It was a cool, breezy night. The couple in front of us in line were silent, and they seemed to be waiting for Min's answer as well.

"Well, it's really just not done," Min said.

"What do you mean?"

"The Chinese and the Filipinos have a bitter history," he said. "It would be a lot to overcome."

"Rapti would say it was prejudice, not animosity."

"Perhaps," he admitted.

"But you will meet her?" I said.

"Of course I will meet any friend of yours. But Sarah, really, you don't need to take this job serious-

ly. It's a formality, that's all."

"I know," I said. "I just want you to meet her. We could all be friends."

But throughout the movie I was planning the meeting place. The grandmother had written in her notes, "Himalayan Lada will meet Albert in a meadowland. Quiet enough for the future to be seen. Sky of birds. Sage moss and high willows, and a house that has not been entered for over one hundred years."

AT the end of August, at the close of the rainy season and one week before I was to return to America, a fight broke out at the camp Chi Ma Wan when Hong Kong police went in to check for weapons. The Vietnamese had carved spears out of tent pegs, and knives from metal bed slats. They stoned the police, until the police retaliated with a tear gas whose concentration blinded several children. Fourteen Vietnamese were seriously injured, and one was dead. When news of this spread to other camps, seven Vietnamese men in different camps disemboweled themselves in protest.

As this occurred, I was writing, in a careful yet uninspired calligraphy, the names of the seven women I thought most appropriate for Min to consider for marriage. I wasn't by any means satisfied that my choices were significantly more ap-



propriate than the others, but I was relieved to have finished the job. As for Rapti, she still refused to meet Min.

That night I was dreaming of Min when he actually appeared above me, peering down into my face. "Sarah," he said, "wake up. Dad hasn't come home yet; it's already one A.M."

"Yeah?" I said, still too nearly asleep to guess what that might mean.

"I think tonight's the night."

"The night?"

"I think they're going back tonight."

"To Hanoi?" I said.

"Yes. I think we should go to the airport."

"Okay." I sat up.

"We have no car."

"I'll call Rapti."

"Ah, the stubborn Rapti," he said, and smiled.

Rapti picked us up in the Canadians' car. I got in the front seat and Min got in the back. He reached his hand forward to Rapti. "At last we meet," he said.

"Hello," she said, smiling, shaking her head, and then she gunned the car into reverse, out of the long, curving driveway.

The drive to Kai Tak airport took about fifteen minutes, exactly enough time for Min and Rapti to move from a polite, vague disagreement into a full-scale argument.

"So, your father is sending the refugees back tonight? Did he get an agreement that they won't be maltreated back home?"

"Well, first of all," Min said from the back seat, "my father does not want to send them back. You'll see when we get there. He will be opposing the action, at the expense of his own job."

"Really?" Rapti said. "I find that hard to believe. Considering."

"Considering what?"

"Considering his past record with the refugees."

"Are you referring to his fight for reforms within the camps?"

"I'm referring to the fact that he proposed a policy to *fine* them for having children inside the camps. Some of them have lived there for years. It's very cruel."

I looked at Min. "It happened while we were in the States," he said, and then he turned to Rapti and said, "All he meant was that having children during these crisis months would place a strain on the community."

"Strain on the community—that's a ridiculous argument. Then nobody in the world should have children. I think asking people not to have children is just another form of genocide."

After a moment of silence Rapti looked at me and shrugged. *Sorry*, she mouthed. I looked back at Min, who made his eyes as big as possible and then shook his head in amazement.

When we arrived at the airport, the Vietnamese were in

the process of boarding the plane. We got as close as we could and stood on a little grassy patch, which I thought was sadly reminiscent of a meadow, at the edge of the runway. We stared through the barbed wire. Albert in fact wasn't protesting. He was standing at the foot of the plane's staircase, bowing to each person who stepped onto the stairs.

The time for protest was past, apparently, and now he could only apologize to each of them, even the smallest children. Some of the people shouted at him, a few spit, and a couple even lunged for him. I saw one refugee bow back, though, and the two men, head to head, looked like foreign dignitaries caught in a dreadful, unlikely situation. I remembered that Albert had said to me once that a person must bow even if he doesn't want to. He must bow at everything, and the more he doesn't want to bow, the more he must. He recalled a phrase that went, "The forehead should be rough with bowing."

The air was heavy and humid, with an odor of overripe flowers. Overhead two helicopters hovered, churning the air, lifting my outer clothes an inch off my body. A dark rain started to fall.

Finally a break in the line occurred as a mother knelt to talk to her child, who was hysterical. Albert turned and saw us. His face was streaming with tears. He smiled, though, and bowed to us. Min bowed back, and then I bowed, and then Rapti herself bowed to him. She had a stern look on her face, and I could tell that she did not approve of this but that she recognized the complexity of Albert's situation.

If I had been able, like Min's grandmother, to read the gestures of women, to discern their entire nature and future in one movement of a head or hand, I would have seen, as Rapti bowed, the present picture open for one moment to reveal the future—a warm, gently decorated apartment in a skyscraper high above a city that belongs again to the Chinese, who have carried it into the twenty-first century by transforming it into an even higher and wealthier and stranger city. On the crowded streets below, the Vietnamese, once held in the camps, have penetrated the bloodstream of the city, so that they are the ones deciding which new refugees to accept and which to reject.

And asleep, sprawled like a starfish on the floor of the apartment, is a small boy with a boxy, bold, contented face, his features drawn from such a wide circle of Asia that one can almost see the rays extending from him to all his origins—from the Philippines to the edges of Russia and Inner Mongolia, across the Tibetan plateau, into the foothills of the Himalayas, touching even the upper lip of India.

But for now none of that was revealed. In fact, as the three of us stood in the perfumy rain of Asia, watching Albert's desperate, endless bowing and what must have been the unbearable desire and longing of the refugees, I couldn't bring myself to believe that the balance of the world—two thirds contentment, one third desire—could ever be restored. ☸



Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms

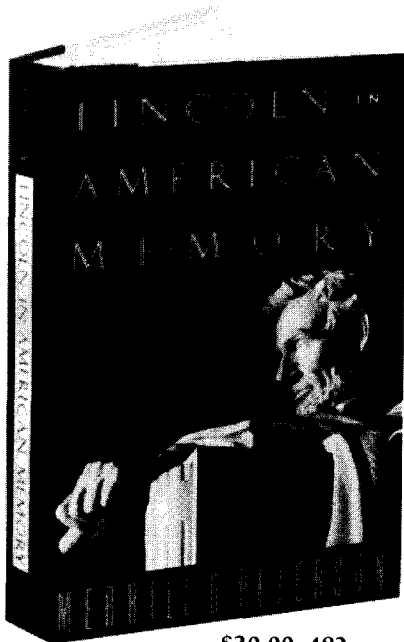
by NANCY CALDWELL SOREL

JOHANNES Brahms was just twenty in June of 1853, when he arrived in Weimar. He came with a letter of introduction to Franz Liszt—Grand Ducal Director of Music Extraordinary—from their mutual friend the violinist Joseph Joachim, and was invited to a “musical session” the following morning at the Altenburg. Brought up in poverty, and having played for hire in the waterfront dives and bordellos of Hamburg, Brahms had probably never entered so sumptuous an establishment as the Altenburg, where Liszt lived with his current mistress, the Princess Carolyne von Sayn-Wittgenstein. He surely never knew a composer with so many pianos—eventually nine, including a spinet that had belonged to Mozart and a Broadwood that had been Beethoven’s. (But then, had not Liszt studied with Salieri, and been kissed as a child by Beethoven?) On that morning several of Liszt’s students, pianists and promising composers in their own right, were also present; they looked not much older than Brahms himself but were better dressed, and infinitely more polished.

It was intimidating—despite his disapproval of Liszt’s musical aesthetics and preference for Romantic excess over classicism and counterpoint. But when Liszt suggested that he play one of the compositions he had brought along, Brahms became unnerved, backed off, and could not be persuaded. Well, then, said his host, he would give it a try. The Scherzo in E-flat minor was a challenge, so untidily written as to be almost illegible, but Liszt—the consummate sight reader, the virtuoso incarnate—dashed it off with ease, and gave a running commentary to boot.

At least one witness said that Brahms was pleased. He could in any case relax. What happened next may have been owing to this relief, or to his not having quite recovered from the journey, or to the warmth of the day or the closeness of the air in the room. How else to explain the fact that when Liszt moved on to his own work—his beloved B minor Sonata—and during an especially impassioned section glanced over to see its effect on Brahms, he spied him sound asleep? ♣

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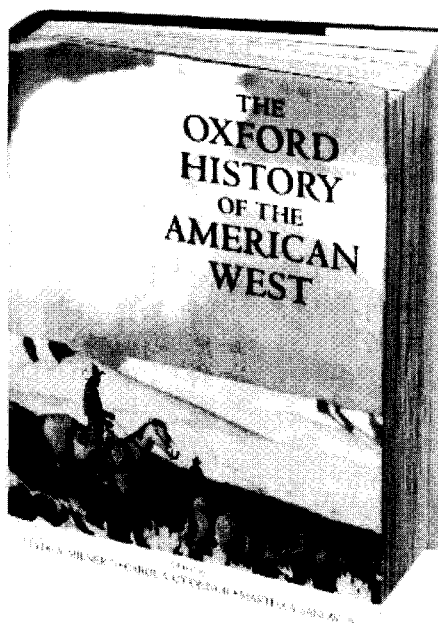
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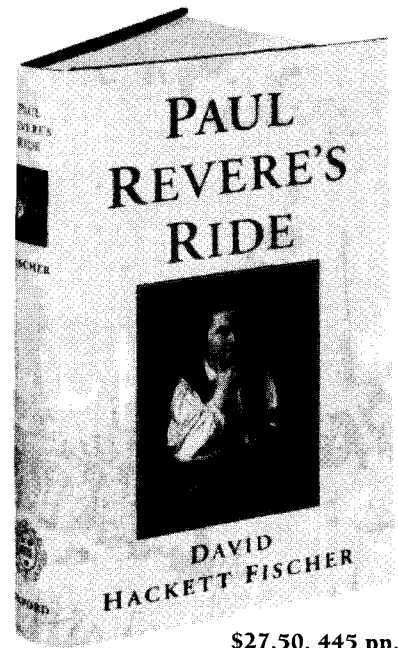
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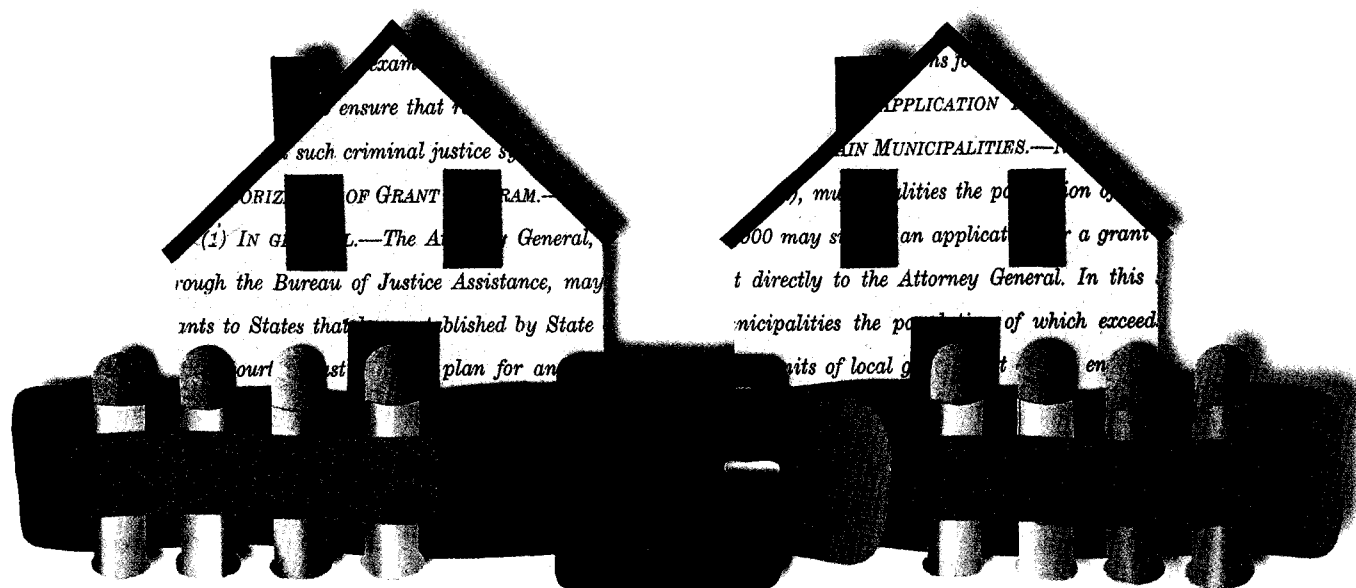
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Crime and Community

by WENDY KAMINER



Beyond the specific provisions of the new federal crime bill is a set of broad assumptions—ideas about the strategies the police should employ not just to arrest criminals but also to prevent crime, and about sentencing and incarceration and how effectively they deter, incapacitate, or punish offenders. In this article, the first of two, the author reports on the debate among law-enforcement professionals over community policing, the federalization of crime, and the future of gun control

CRIME control is not a science; nor is it a religion, a simple matter of revealed truth, except perhaps to those who blame rising crime on the abolition of prayer in the schools. God knows whether restoring school prayer might lower the crime rate. Eighty percent of people surveyed last August believed that increasing the number of police officers would significantly decrease violent crime, and what 80 percent of the people wanted they quickly got from their elected officials: one of the most popular provisions of the new crime bill is the promise of federal dollars for 100,000 new police officers. It has intuitive, commonsense appeal. Even if the police have no direct effect on crime, many people feel safer in their presence, assuming they don't harbor suspicions of police brutality, and when people feel safer, they are more likely to ven-

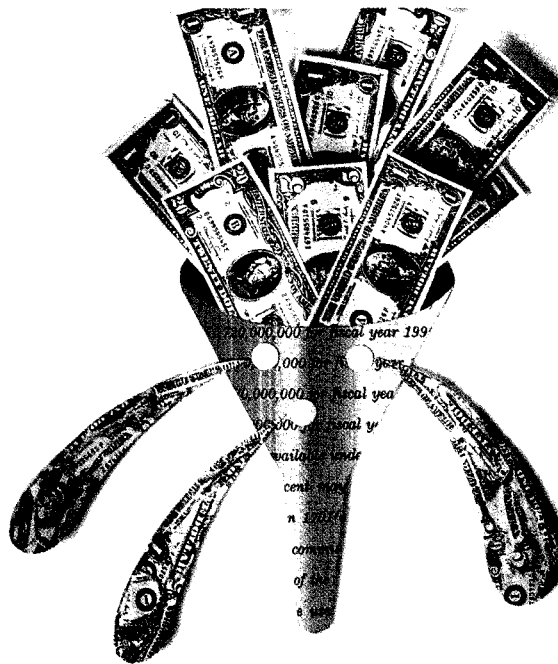
ture out of their homes to make their neighborhoods safer.

The 100,000 new officers are specifically intended to help revitalize neighborhood life; they're supposed to be trained in community policing, a progressive model of police work embraced, at least rhetorically, by practically everyone. Community policing calls for a partnership of the police and local residents, and expands the focus of the police from arrests to intervention and preventive "problem solving." In its most reductive form, this approach is viewed as a shift from deploying police officers in patrol cars that randomly cruise the streets and answer calls for assistance to deploying them on the street and encouraging them to establish ongoing relationships with residents. Community policing is often described simplistically as a return to cops on the beat who are integral parts of the neighborhood.

New Age Cops

IN its sophisticated form, however, community policing entails what William Bratton, formerly Boston's and now New York City's police commissioner, has called a "sea change" in the concept of policing, from reactive, "incident-oriented" law enforcement to a hybrid of enforcement and community-service work aimed at crime prevention. It envisions the demilitarization of police departments, a shifting of authority down through management to the ranks, so that cops on the street will have more discretion and can go beyond making arrests to analyzing underlying problems and responding to them with community cooperation. At its most cosmic, community policing requires teaching critical-thinking skills to people who have traditionally been taught to play by the book. Advocates of community policing stress that it is not simply a new program or strategy but a transformative new philosophy—what a New Age cop might call a paradigm shift.

Some observers are skeptical that using federal dollars to hire local police officers will facilitate community policing or enhance public safety. In general, community policing doesn't rely on increasing the numbers of police officers. It seeks to increase community participation in crime control. The idea is that police departments will become more effective not by increasing their numbers but by extending their reach into communities. The ratio of officers to citizens is, in fact, a "poor predictor of violent crime," according to Michael Smith, the president of the Vera Institute of Justice, in Manhattan. People fear street crime greatly, but while crime against strangers is rising, much violent crime still occurs between people who know each other. Private relationships need to be policed, as the history of domestic violence shows, but they need to be policed differently from holdups of convenience stores. Additional police officers will have an impact, however marginal, only in areas where the police departments are now grossly understaffed, Smith believes. In New York City "the number of new cops won't make much difference," he says. "When cutbacks reduced the



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number of police, the number of arrests per officer rose; crime went up and down during that period." Smith is dismissive of federal funding to hire additional officers: "The analytic work that tells you we need more cops across the board doesn't exist. It was a campaign promise."

Ronald Hampton, the executive director of the National Black Police Association, agrees that on the whole we have enough police officers; he contends that we simply don't educate or use them properly. "We need to focus on what police do, not how many of them are doing it," he says. "If I take a hundred thousand new police officers and put them through the present induction program, most of them won't end up on the street and they won't bring their heads with them if they get there. If we don't first change the philosophy of policing in this country, whatever police officers we add will fall

into the black hole that exists in every police department."

Everybody talks about community policing, advocates agree, but few police departments practice it. Michael Smith calls it "rhetorical policing." Herman Goldstein, a professor of law at the University of Wisconsin, stressed last year at a Justice Department conference on community policing that the term "is widely used without any concern for its substance." He said, "Political leaders and, unfortunately, many police leaders hook onto the label for the positive images it projects but do not engage with—or invest in—the concept." Goldstein warns that if "community policing" becomes a catchall term (like "empowerment" or "codependency"), it will be regarded as a panacea for a catchall litany of urban problems. Successful implementation of community policing means fundamentally redefining both police functions and the community's expectations of the police, he says. Service-oriented policing is not intended to satisfy all the needs of communities that are "starved for social services."

If communities are apt to expect too much from community policing, many police departments are still prepared to deliver too little. The scope of the reforms that would be needed and the intensity of internal resistance to them are routinely underestimated or ignored. Hampton says that it

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could take up to ten years to implement community policing in a typical metropolitan police department, a task complicated by the fact that the average tenure for a police chief today is only about three years.

Mayors come and go as well, which can bring changes in policing priorities. Shortly after taking office this past January, New York City's new mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, called for a reform of the community-policing programs adopted by his predecessor, David Dinkins. Giuliani, a former prosecutor with a penchant for talking tough, criticized community policing for its focus on social services. He suggested that social service is at best an "add-on" to police work and at worst a distraction from crime control. Giuliani's remarks typified the response of law-enforcement traditionalists to new models of policing and missed the point made by advocates of community policing: that crime control includes crime prevention, which requires an understanding of a community's character and its social-service needs.

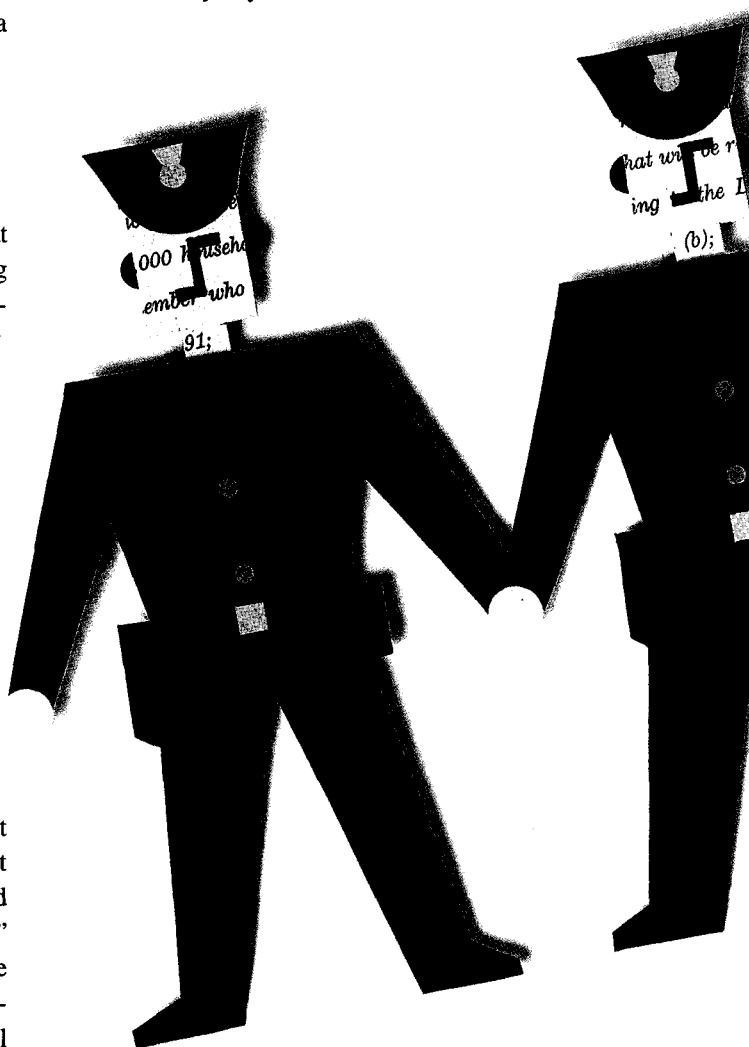
Turning the "Ship of Policing"

COMMUNITY policing may be a particularly hard sell at a time when a frightened and angry public is demanding a more punitive justice system, not a more understanding one. But even in the most judicious of times community policing would be difficult to implement. The "ship of policing" will turn slowly, Commissioner Bratton cautions, because "we have to change everything we do"—recruitment, training and supervision, and militaristic management policies. Bratton says he is unaware of any program that teaches community policing "the way we would like it to be taught." There is resistance from the "old guard," who fear losing authority and control as police departments are decentralized, and there is resistance from recruits, "who come in expecting to chase people and do shoot-ups." Bratton says, "Eighty-five percent of police work is not that. The average police officer in America is never going to draw his gun in his entire career."

The image of policing is still shaped by the entertainment industry, Ronald Hampton observes. "Some recruits expect to come here and be Dirty Harry or Don Johnson. We need to shift from a spirit of adventure to a spirit of service." Hampton adds that some recruits who do enter the police academy with an ethic of service leave with a taste for authority, which they find easier to satisfy by policing racial minorities. "The way you police in an affluent white community is not the way you police in a poor black community," he says, and goes on to tell this story of a young black police officer engaged in on-the-job training in the predominantly black neighborhood where he was raised: "I asked him a few questions about his assignment. He said he was assigned to Georgetown, which is about ninety percent white, but he'd been training in a ninety-nine percent black

community. He said, 'I'm disappointed. I don't want to go to Georgetown.' He said he wanted to work where the police tell the people what to do, not where the people tell the police. That kid wouldn't have said that before he went into the police academy. Now he's calling the people he grew up with trash; he's calling them scum."

These caveats about the prospects for community policing in the near future do not necessarily mean that the federal promise of new police officers is misguided. Congressman Barney Frank asserts that the current failure to use the police force with the utmost effectiveness and efficiency is no reason not to increase its numbers. Inefficiencies are built into any bureaucracy, he observes, adding that liberals fall back on arguments about inefficiency when they have ideological objections to hiring more officers. "Do they say this about



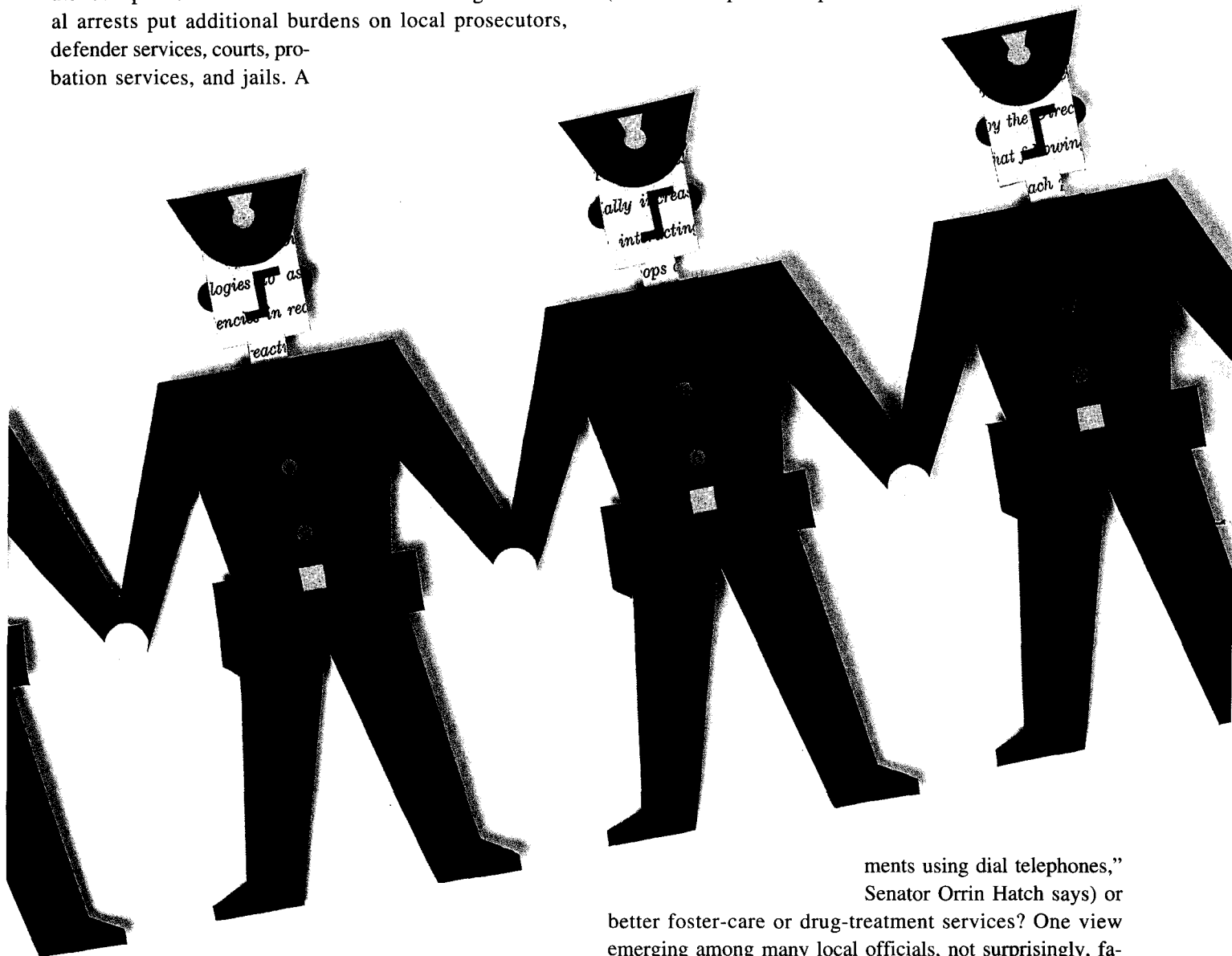
housing? Do they say we shouldn't build any more housing until we learn to use what we have efficiently? They don't say 'No more aid to poor countries unless we learn to do that efficiently' either." Bratton believes that some police departments do need additional officers, although their needs will vary. The Boston Police Department lost people over the past decade through attri-

tion, Bratton notes; Michael Smith stresses that New York City paid for more police officers by raising taxes.

The trouble is, Michael Smith points out, that if the government allocates funds for additional officers, a city like New York will apply for them regardless of need. "Politically, you take what you can get and try to deal with the down side of the gift." What might be the down side of increasing the local police force? Additional officers making additional arrests put additional burdens on local prosecutors, defender services, courts, probation services, and jails. A

"We Know Best"

UNDERLYING the concern about federal funding for cops are larger questions about federal funding in general. Different localities have different public-safety needs; why should Congress decide they need more cops and not more computers ("There are police depart-



change to community policing is not necessarily supposed to result in more arrests, since its focus is on prevention. But the standard measure of police effectiveness is the arrest rate, and this will not be abandoned anytime soon, despite all the talk about community policing. Senator Joseph Biden acknowledges that with an influx of new police officers "costs will go way up." (How far up an official at the Justice Department could not say.) Perhaps in Boston the benefits will outweigh the costs. In New York they may not. More than new police officers, Michael Smith says, New York needs new drug-treatment programs.

ments using dial telephones," Senator Orrin Hatch says) or better foster-care or drug-treatment services? One view emerging among many local officials, not surprisingly, favors "decategorizing" federal funding, in order to return to something like a block-grant system that would allow localities some discretion to diagnose their own problems and prescribe their own cures. Instead of allocating money for police officers, the argument goes, Congress should establish a more general, flexible fund for public safety or domestic security. New York could request drug-treatment programs, and Boston could request more police officers. At least Congress could offer localities a menu of law-enforcement options, allowing them to choose one from column A and one from column B or C—more cops or computers or security guards for schools.

Attorney General Janet Reno has been obliquely advocating such decentralization for some time. In a speech to the American Bar Association last August she explained the problem of categorized funding like this: "We have created a giant federal government with many agencies designed to help people, and they come up with wonderful programs and come to the community and tell the community, 'We've got this wonderful program but, I'm sorry, you're not eligible for it. Our round grant won't fit in your square hole.' The federal government comes to communities and says, 'We can tell you how to do this; we know best.'" Communities know best, Reno and others suggest.

Perhaps. Increasing local control of federal grant money would be effective to the extent that local officials are smart, innovative, and reasonably honest. It is also true that federal control of funds is as effective as federal officials. Politics, ideology, venality, and incompetence are apt to drive programmatic priorities at the local, state, and federal levels equally. Still, it makes sense to assume that local officials in general have a better, more visceral understanding of local problems. And whether or not decentralization encourages corruption at the local level, corruption is a constant problem that requires constant monitoring at every level; a centralized design of programs may only encourage a different kind of corruption. Local officials complain privately that categorized funding encourages them to lie and vie for programs they don't really need.

There are also questions about how wisely federal officials will distribute funds. The Justice Department recently awarded a small number of community-policing grants, in some cases favoring suburbs and towns with low crime rates over more crime-ridden cities. The relatively bucolic Sandwich, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod, won out over the beleaguered city of Lynn, among other places. Indianapolis lost a grant to an affluent suburb. It doesn't make sense, the city's mayor, Stephen Goldsmith, says. "People in high-crime areas pay taxes that are then allocated, in the form of policing grants, to communities with less crime."

Goldsmith, a former prosecutor, initially welcomed the promise of new police officers. Now he is skeptical about how the Justice Department will implement it. Stressing that crime is primarily a local problem, he contends that decategorizing federal money may be the most important step the federal government could take to enhance public safety.

Federalizing Crime

THAT crime, like politics, is a local affair is a universally acknowledged truth. In Congress politicians, right and left, often begin discussions of crime control by pointing out that 95 percent of all crime is local. Then they explain the rationale for imposing federal penalties on whatever crime is of particular concern at the moment—carjacking and spouse abuse have been targeted recently. There

are good reasons for federalizing these offenses: stolen cars and parts move in interstate commerce; spouse abuse is still ignored in many states, and if gender-based violence is a form of discrimination, women arguably have a federal right to be free of it.

Indeed, the federalization of a great many crimes can be rationalized; an interstate nexus is rarely hard to find. (The 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibiting racial discrimination in public accommodations was based on the commerce clause of the Constitution.) Arguments about federalization tend to be more political than principled. Liberals tend to contest the federalization of criminal behavior except when civil rights are involved. Conservatives tend to oppose federalizing racial or sexual discrimination, in deference to either states' rights or a free market. People usually want the federal government to extend jurisdiction in areas in which they favor stepped-up enforcement. Or, as Congressman Barney Frank says, "People favor federalizing what they don't like and oppose federalizing what they like."

No one likes juvenile violence, which has increased dramatically and disproportionately. According to a report by Northeastern University's National Crime Analysis Program, from 1985 to 1991 the number of males aged thirteen to seventeen arrested for murder rose by more than 100 percent. Juveniles have been involved in high-profile cases (a thirteen-year-old was among those implicated in the fatal shooting of a British tourist in Florida last fall), and the spectacle of children with guns and no apparent empathy or conscience is particularly chilling. The rise in serious juvenile crime overshadows a recent modest decline in violent crime overall and accounts for much public outcry over violence. So it's not surprising that the Senate voted to federalize a great deal of juvenile crime. Amendments passed hastily by the Senate, without hearings, required that juveniles over the age of thirteen be federally prosecuted as adults for certain crimes involving firearms, federalized the possession of handguns and ammunition by juveniles, and federalized gang activity, loosely defined.

In voting for significant expansions of federal jurisdiction over juveniles, the Senate was undeterred by the absence of a federal system for prosecuting juveniles or federal correctional facilities for incarcerating them. Juvenile justice has traditionally been the province of the states. Federalizing juvenile offenses could require the establishment of a redundant federal system and could also impose additional burdens on the states, if they're required to house juveniles subject to federal prosecution. New York City's commissioner of the Department of Juvenile Justice opposed the Senate bill federalizing the possession of handguns and ammunition in the expectation that it would strain local facilities and increase delays in processing juvenile cases.

But if there are loose theoretical limits and few principled ones to extensions of federal jurisdiction, there are practical limits to what federal prosecutors, defenders, and courts can

manage. Federal district courts are already swamped by drug cases that should probably be tried in state courts. It's becoming increasingly difficult to obtain a civil trial. Federal judges tend to oppose the expansion of federal jurisdiction, and the Justice Department seems wary of it as well. An official at the department asserts that some thought has been given to issuing guidelines advising federal prosecutors when to exercise jurisdiction over crimes that are federal and local concurrently. Political reasons for establishing federal jurisdiction don't necessarily translate into legal reasons for exercising it. Congress may enact a broad range of federal criminal laws that federal prosecutors may enforce only erratically, if at all—but there's no clamor yet for truth in legislating.

In recent years Congress has extended federal jurisdiction dramatically in cases involving the use or possession of firearms as well as of drugs. Whatever salutary effect this has had on gun violence has been too subtle to quantify. Liberals have long argued that instead of simply increasing penalties for the illegal use of guns, the federal government should restrict sales to the public. Last year Congress took a small practical step, or a great symbolic leap, in this direction when it passed the Brady bill, which imposes a waiting period on buyers of handguns and was signed into law by

President Bill Clinton seven years after it was proposed. The Senate also passed a ban on the sale of guns to minors (which is already illegal in many states) and on the manufacture of certain assault weapons.

60 Million Handguns

THESE were not exactly controversial measures, although they were quite difficult to pass. There is strong majority support for gun control. Seventy percent of Americans want stricter gun laws, according to Gallup; nearly 90 percent of the public favors the Brady bill.

But even supporters of the Brady bill are likely to concede that it will probably have little effect overall on gun violence. Colin Ferguson, who opened fire on a crowded Long Island commuter train last December, killing six people and wounding nineteen, bought his gun in California, after undergoing a sixteen-day waiting period (the store owner added a day "for good measure" to the state's legally mandated fifteen-day period), and there's no persuasive evidence that waiting periods have decreased violent crime in states that already mandate them. A federally mandated waiting period may save a few lives, people say, and it represents a crucial, symbolic defeat for the National Rifle Association. It may also lead to more-

GORGEOUS SURFACES

They are, the surfaces, gorgeous: a master
pastry chef at work here, the dips and whorls,
the wrist-twist
squeezes of cream from the tube
to the tart, sweet bleak sugarwork, needlework
toward the perfect lace doily
where sit the bone-china teacups, a little maze
of meaning maybe in their arrangement
sneaky obliques, shadow
allusives all piling
atop one another. Textures succulent but famished,
banal, bereft. These surfaces,
these flickering patinas,
through which,
if you could drill, or hack,
or break a trapdoor latch, if you could penetrate
these surfaces' milky cataracts, you
would drop,
free-fall
like a hope chest full of lead

to nowhere, no place, a dry-wind, sour,
nada place,
and you would keep dropping,
tumbling, slow
motion, over and over for one day, six days, fourteen
decades, eleven centuries (a long time
falling to fill a zero) and in that time
not a leaf, no rain,
not a single duck, nor hearts, not one human, nor sleep,
nor grace, nor graves—falling
to where the bottom, finally, is again the surface,
which is gorgeous, of course,
which is glue, saw- and stone-dust,
which is blue-gray
ice, which is
the barely glinting grit
of abyss.

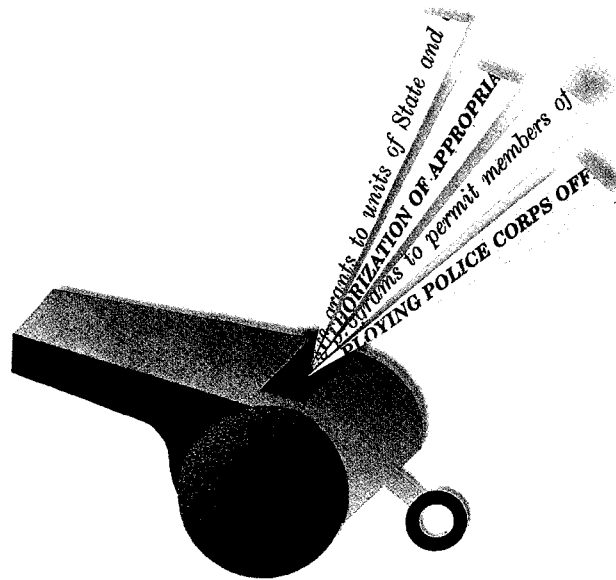
—THOMAS LUX

stringent gun-control laws, as advocates hope and the NRA fears, such as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's proposal to tax ammunition or ban certain kinds of it. But with some 200 million firearms already at large, including 60 million handguns, there's no reason to have high hopes for traditional point-of-purchase prohibitions. Now that this initial battle for gun control has been won, it has become nearly irrelevant to the war against gun violence.

Because gun-control debates have been defined by efforts to restrict the sale of firearms in the face of NRA opposition, alternative strategies for regulating the nation's enormous stockpile of weapons have barely been considered until recently. A report published last year by the National Academy of Sciences suggests adopting some of the tactics used against drugs—focusing on illegal transactions and undesirable uses. A shift in focus away from sweeping, hotly contested bans on possession and use would at least have significant political advantages. The NRA could hardly object to attacks on the black market.

This proposal to concentrate on illegal gun markets does not equate drugs with guns, or one market with the other; nor does it necessarily imply that we should focus exclusively on the illegal supply of guns, as we have traditionally focused on the illegal supply of drugs, ignoring conditions that create the demand. But it is an acknowledgment that effective near-total prohibitions on guns are as unrealistic as prohibitions on drugs and alcohol. Given the American tradition of violent individualism, the staggering number of guns already in circulation, and the likelihood that more or less law-abiding citizens concerned with self-defense will continue to desire guns, the belief that this might someday be a gun-free country seems more and more utopian.

The failure to enact meaningful gun-control measures twenty-five or thirty years ago has made the slogan "When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns" seem almost true. So far the explosion of gun violence may have increased the desire for gun control more than the desire to own guns. (Reported ownership of firearms has remained fairly stable during the past ten years, according to Gallup, while support



T HERE ARE LARGER QUESTIONS
ABOUT FEDERAL FUNDING. DIFFERENT LOCALITIES HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS; WHY SHOULD CONGRESS DECIDE THEY NEED MORE COPS AND NOT MORE COMPUTERS OR BETTER DRUG-TREATMENT SERVICES?

for gun control has increased.) But the balance could shift if the violence continues; if people lose all faith in the government's ability to protect them, they will take drastic steps to protect themselves, with public approval. Last year a Louisiana jury acquitted Rodney Peairs of manslaughter after he shot and killed a Japanese exchange student who mistakenly rang his doorbell seeking a Halloween party at another address. In the belief that he was defending his home, Peairs asked no questions; the entire encounter took about one minute.

With more and more people feeling besieged, even at home, by nameless strangers, like the man who abducted and killed twelve-year-old Polly Klaas in California, studies demonstrating that keeping a gun at home nearly triples one's risk of being killed (often by someone one knows) will probably have less effect than studies linking smoking to lung cancer. Millions of people start smoking and continue to smoke because they don't really believe that lung cancer will ever attack them. Frightened people will buy guns in the belief that they will never turn them against each other. For many middle-class people who live and work in low-crime areas, fear of crime is often fear of people they don't know.

"Good Kids Have Guns"

FEAR seems to play an important role in the proliferation of guns among juveniles, particularly urban minorities, according to David Kennedy, a research fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. A recent National Institute of Justice study of male juvenile offenders and male students in inner-city high schools found that "self-protection in a hostile and violent world was the chief reason to own and carry a gun." Twenty-two percent of the students reported owning a gun. Thirty-five percent reported carrying a gun regularly or occasionally; family, friends, and illegal markets were their primary sources. A majority of students (69 percent) came from families in which men owned guns, and nearly half (45 percent) reported having been "threatened or shot at on the way to or from

Can An Intelligent Person Be Religious?



Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

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school.” Kennedy remarks that youth culture in the inner cities is akin to prison culture: “captive, lawless, dangerous, self-regulated.” Depressing as this is, he adds, it does suggest that the market for guns among juveniles may be malleable: control the fear and you control the guns, which in turn decreases the fear.

“Good kids have guns,” John Silva, the director of safety and security for the Cambridge, Massachusetts, public schools, observes. “From a district attorney’s perspective, a good kid would never carry a gun, but the DAs don’t live in the projects. There’s so much fear. Good kids who want to go to school and do the right thing—they’re afraid of the gangs and the drug dealers; they want to protect themselves and their families. Good kids, bad kids—the categories don’t apply anymore.”

The Ideological Common Ground of “Community”

IF good kids use guns, then crime is not simply a failure of character, as Ronald Reagan once claimed. Nor is it merely a failure of government—to reduce poverty and enable good people to grow. If good kids use guns, then crime is a failure of community. That, at least, is the emerging wisdom about crime.

Talk about community is beginning to dominate criminal-justice debates. Community policing, community defender services, community courts, and community “empowerment” efforts are praised for their “holistic” approach to crime. (“Holistic” is another coming word in crime control.) The concept of community is one that both liberals and conservatives can embrace. The community is a private and a public place, located somewhere between the individual and big government. It combines conservative belief in individual responsibility with liberal faith in collective, civic solutions to the individual’s problems.

Politicians who want to sound progressive sometimes claim that partisan approaches to crime are giving way to a new, bipartisan pragmatism. And it is true that liberals and conservatives seem to be staking out some common ground on crime control, at least rhetorically—although the neat divisions between liberal and conservative approaches to crime have always been a little facile. Liberals focus on root causes, we always say, while conservatives focus on controlling the effects of crime. But in fact liberals have never advocated disbanding police departments, tearing down prisons, and ignoring the effects of crime while we await its cure. Nor have conservatives ignored root causes; they’ve just defined them differently. Every time conservative preachers and politicians rail against pornography, or the media’s attack on family values, or the legitimization of homosexuality, they are addressing what they see as root causes of crime. There have even been exceptions to the liberal attachment to individual rights and the conservative attach-

ment to authority. In the gun-control debate conservatives defended the rights of individual gun owners against liberal assertions of the need for social order.

Communitarianism has facilitated liberal appeals to order, because it finesses the conflict between individual rights and social control. Communitarians use the concept of communal “rights” to peace and security as a limit on individual rights to engage in deviant behavior. The concept is misleading: communities don’t have rights under our Constitution; they have interests and a presumption of majority rule, which they’re required to exercise with respect for individual rights. But the language of communal rights is politically effective; it provides liberals with a way of positing social order as a primary liberal value.

Is this common ground or merely common language? Liberals and conservatives still maintain very different notions about government’s proper role in facilitating community development and instilling values in citizens. Orrin Hatch thinks that the federal government should allow each of the fifty states to develop a values curriculum for public schools, without worrying so much about strict separations of Church and State; some religious values, he says, are “generic values that help people realize there is a better way.” Janet Reno talks about providing families with social services that will help ensure that every child is raised with a conscience. She talks about the need for community advocates who would help individual citizens obtain the services of their government and mediate disputes with landlords. She talks about pro bono legal work. Under the rubric of “community” Reno can call for a return to the legal-service ethic of the early 1970s while Orrin Hatch calls for government vouchers to ensure school choice, getting values into schools, and “cleaning up” television and movies. Reno does seem ready to provide the broom. It is one of the ironies of the crime debate that liberals and conservatives, while they argue over the ways to address violence directly in real life, may come together over the need to censor violence in the media.

It is fitting, however, that the media emerge as a battleground for crime prevention. Crime-control debates have always been driven by imagery. Members of Congress are used to gesturing on crime, passing laws that are less effective than expressive of an attitude toward crime (they’re against it). Crime also undermines the image of America that politicians celebrate: “The American people are fundamentally decent,” they intone, as if criminals were of some other species.

Violent crime became a pre-eminent problem last year not because fundamentally decent middle-class people, who set the political agenda, had an awakening of conscience. Rather, they were awakened by fear. Crime began to seem less contained in the inner cities as it spilled out onto highways, into shopping centers and suburban schools. Somehow, it seemed to take us by surprise. “How did this happen?” people ask, surveying the wreckage. ☛

IN 1903

My grandfather buried people, German Lutherans only, like himself, one after another he buried them. The black iron fence around the cemetery behind St. Peter's Church would be expanded as time moved on and he buried the old farmers and their wives and sometimes their sons and daughters, one after another. In 1903 they were burying Conrad Lindtner, died of a stroke.

My grandfather looked old himself, but he was born as recently as 1860, only forty-three in 1903, as the wind whipped his lengthy beard, already streaked with white, and his black gown rose and fell beside the coffin and the grave, and holding the black book with its silvery tissued pages, he read to those assembled from the book. He knew it all by heart, but they wanted to see the book.

In that cold Canadian winter he blessed the soul of Conrad Lindtner, his large white hairless hand upraised—I remember his hands—and he said once more the words “. . . *Asche zu Asche, Staub zu Staub*. . .” This was in the country. The land is gently rolling, the church as usual situated at the highest point, and you could look out over fields for miles if you wanted to.

Horses and buggies in the shed shivered and creaked in the cold; the buggies all were black, my grandmother's clothes were black, and the round pastoral cap was black. My mother, the young organist, wore her best winter woolen dress, black with gray dots and twenty buttons. A fine misty snow fell on the crowd around the grave, and they were all in black, black suits and white shirts were what the farmers had.

Pastor Eberhard Holm was the first one in the township to have a camera, and I have all the pictures. I have them here. I've traveled to that crossroads, that church, that cemetery, the rectory across the road, many times, recently bringing the pictures along to compare. I am not believed when I say that in one hundred years nothing has changed. What was there is still there, nothing added, more graves is all.

You can see for yourself, I'll tell you how to go.
It's all in black and white still.
There was no color then.

—GERALD DUMAS



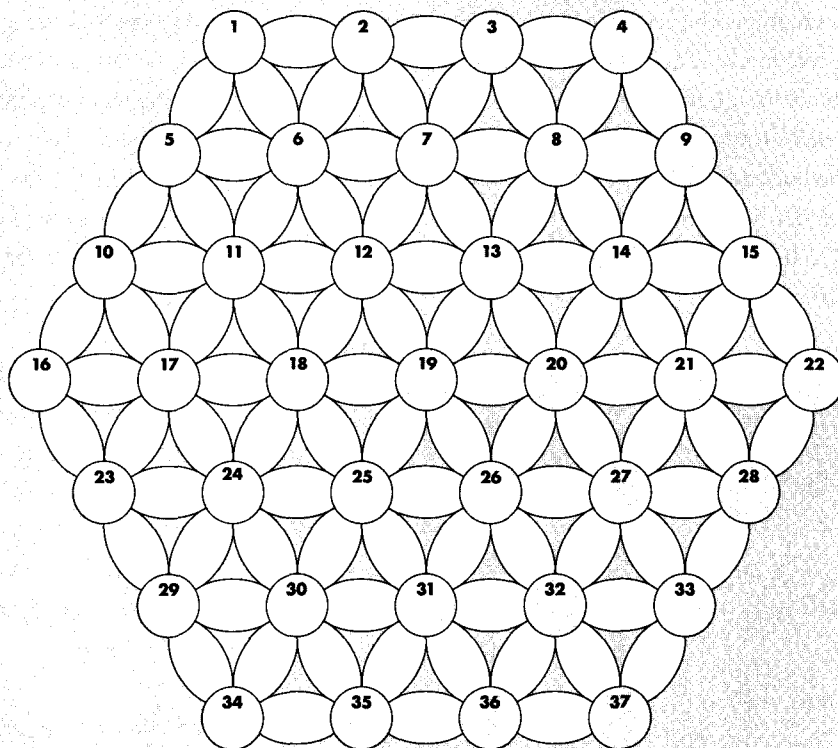
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Garden Plot

The diagram represents a flower garden with 37 flowers in full or—at the borders—partial bloom. Each clue answer is to be entered clockwise in a flower, with one letter per petal and one letter—it may be any in the word—removed to the flower's center. Perimeter words begin and end on the border; interior words start in a petal to be determined. The numbered central letters, when read left to right, will reveal the kind of flower grown in each of the seven horizontal rows of the garden. Answers include five proper nouns.

See page 134 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 146.

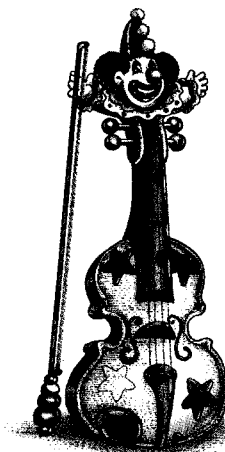


Clues

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Tiller of land's beginning in border (4) | 12. Shrub I produce samurai's way (7) | the guy's faulty reasoning (7) |
| 2. "Flower Hour"—for lovers of greenery? (5) | 13. Owner of a large farm managed by an entertaining woman (7) | 26. Only tool for removing dirt from behind some fruit (7) |
| 3. Squirting can involved in soil erosion (5) | 14. Worm in ground under it (7) | 27. Bottle that sprays around back of fern in church (7) |
| 4. Maneuver cultivator mostly along-side of yard (4) | 15. 1,000 leaves Earl picks in long plots? (5) | 28. Turned dirt—about a ton, in fact (5) |
| 5. Work the ground around a place in New England (5) | 16. Ultimately, hoe and rake going into magistrate's vehicle (4) | 29. Last sign of flower in receding ooze barely shows (5) |
| 6. Animals in harness glide among colors (7) | 17. Birds' alarming cry pollinators heard (7) | 30. Firmly fixed ends of daisies in cultivated earth (7) (<i>hyphenated</i>) |
| 7. In the article here, a legendary gardener pinches (7) | 18. Gathering unproud sprays? (7) | 31. Most of cleome scattered about on glass (7) |
| 8. Cursed malady in rose (7) | 19. Annoying boor carries centerpiece of bouquets inside (7) | 32. Trying on wild rose pierced by hairpin (7) |
| 9. Native American pumpkins initially grow like vines (5) | 20. Bats go nuts about arborist's original confections (7) | 33. Enclosed bovine in part of a garden (5) |
| 10. Cut off tip of evergreen in container (5) | 21. Sun is falling behind pair of poppies for painter (7) | 34. Oddly swampish fluids found in plants (4) |
| 11. Book about metropolitan horticulturist (7) | 22. Spot pest in the garden (4) | 35. Garden walk bordering fair plot of ground (5) |
| | 23. Intensely desired having evergreens? (5) | 36. Shade crossing through blooming hostas (5) |
| | 24. Expand back half of garden, having one eye turned on the front (7) | 37. Container with end underground (4) |
| | 25. Soak head of marigold, following | |

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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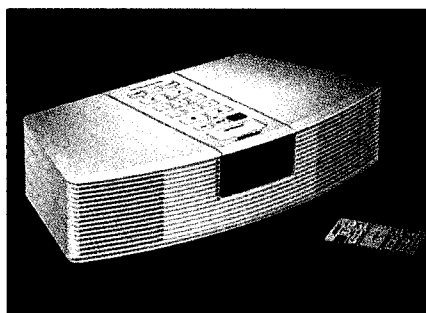
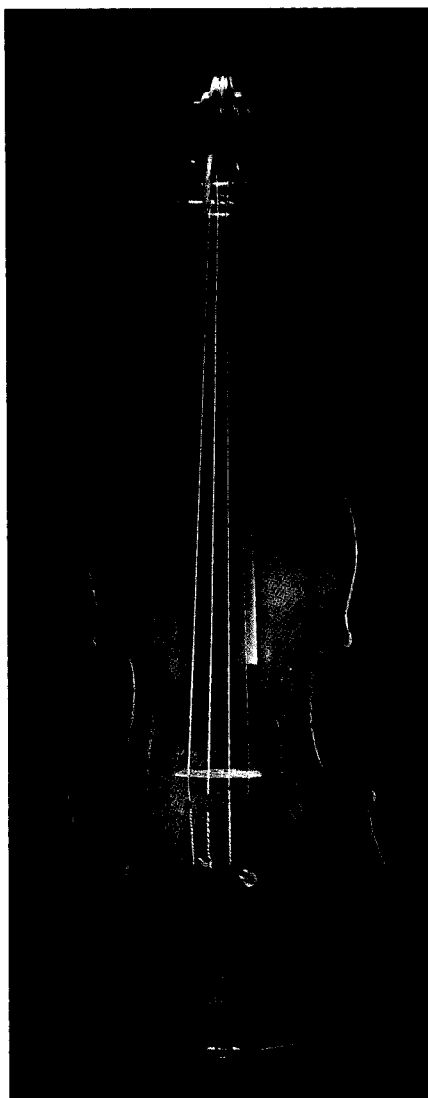
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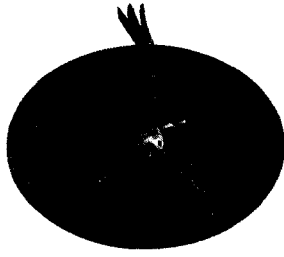
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ABOUT twenty people stood where a gravel road ended at the gate to a cattle pasture, watching a female peregrine falcon pump her long, slender wings and sweep in wide, climbing circles above them. An early-March sunset silhouetted the low mountain ridges around Dillon, Montana, and lit up the falcon's clay-orange breast each time

by Jeff Hull

she swung toward it. The peregrine's spiraling flight lifted her higher and higher into the sky, until the only detail visible was the low sun flashing silver on the undersides of her wings.

The people watching were almost all members of the Montana Falconers Association, gathered for their annual spring meet. The meet had been organized by

Brian Mutch, who works for the Peregrine Fund, the organization largely responsible for repopulating the United States with endangered peregrine falcons. Mutch had been charged with rehabilitating this particular bird after she was found wounded by a gunshot the previous fall.

As the falcon soared, the evening sky filled with the fluttering forms of ducks that wanted to land in a creek bottom across the field from the falconers or in the pasture itself, where a local rancher had left alfalfa for his cattle. The ducks had spotted the falcon from a great distance and were careful to fly above the raptor. Most ducks—in fact, most birds—can escape a falcon in a tail chase; falcons are most effective when they stoop down on prey. The peregrine ignored the flying ducks and circled in the sky—"waiting on"—watching the people on the ground.

Mutch had spotted five mallards feed-

A gyrfalcon hybrid in her hood (above) and with her partner



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALISON MEYER

ing in a shallow swale in the field between the end of the road and the creek bottom. When the peregrine had climbed to about a thousand feet, Mutch and his brother, Dale, charged across the field, dodging befuddled cattle, whooping both to flush the ducks and to draw the falcon's attention. The mallards shot into the air and fled in a tight sprint to the south.

High above, the falcon tilted earthward, rowed her wings to power her stoop, and then poured herself down through the sky. Wind ripped audibly through her feathers, and the small brass bells tied to her feet whistled. When the ducks saw the falcon free-falling toward them, the small flock split. A drake hesitated, unsure which pair to follow, and the prey had selected itself. The falcon slammed the duck with an impact that sounded like a baseball bat swatting a down pillow. Sinking her talons deep into the duck's back, the peregrine rode her prey to the ground with little loss of velocity.

A strange *oooohhh* of awe rose from the falconers gathered at the end of the road, one that said they appreciated the kill but felt it a little, too. Mutch ran to where the two birds had come down, worried that the falcon had hit the ground too hard and might be injured. He found her perched atop the duck, stripping feathers and skin from his breast with twitching jerks of her sharp beak.

Mutch picked up both the duck and the falcon. Then, after ripping off one of the duck's legs and holding it in front of the falcon until she began to eat, Mutch drew the rest of the duck away. Usually the falconer will reward his bird by allowing it to eat part of the warm carcass, often the head, and then supplement its meal with some frozen meat. Once the bird is separated from its kill, the falconer will bag the prey and take it home for supper. Brian Mutch dined on duck that night.

FALCONRY, at heart, is about what birds do naturally. Perhaps the sport's greatest attraction is its lifting of veils, so to speak, on the nature of killing and prey, and the perception it creates for the falconer that he is somehow one step closer to the workings of the raptor's world. That the falcons, hawks, and eagles used in the sport are calm, poised killers that employ thrilling aerial abilities in slaying their victims adds to the fascination. Falconers become attached

to their birds with a passion that nonfalconers simply can't imagine. Two weeks after the Dillon meet Brian Mutch sat in a bar in Ovando, Montana, talking about the lengths he'd go to for his other bird, a captive-bred peregrine named June that he has had for nine years. "I've often wondered, if I got stuck in my truck somewhere, like in a snowstorm, how I could shave off pieces of my skin and keep her going," Mutch said, with a chuckle that did not mean he was kidding. Many falconers have a fascination with birds of prey that runs too deep for them to understand fully. They speak of seeing falcons in their dreams and remember spending hours as children gazing at hawks on telephone poles. "It's crazy," said a falconer at the Dillon meet. "I hope I get over it someday."

A falconer's involvement with his bird is constantly reinforced by the amount of time they spend together. "Manning" a bird, or teaching it to hunt from the fist and return to a lure, requires daily interaction. Once the bird has been taught to accept its human hunting partner, maintaining it in effective flying condition demands constant attention.

Unlike dogs and horses, a wild-caught falcon is not submissive (although a captive-bred one might be somewhat so). Falconers do not physically intimidate their birds into compliance the way a dog trainer might. The falconer's main tool is hunger. Falconry is based on convincing a bird that the falconer is its best meal ticket. This is not to say that falconers starve their birds; that would be counterproductive, because raptors must maintain their weight within a delicate range—a matter of a few ounces—in order to fly efficiently.

Ultimately, a falconer doesn't hunt a bird; the falcon recognizes and agrees to hunt with a consistent producer of prey. Every time a bird leaves the fist, it is free to migrate—to fly away forever. In the early days of falconry on this continent, a number of falconers incorporated that fact into their sport. Falcons, particularly peregrines, were trapped in the spring, manned, and flown throughout the fall and winter. When migratory urges began welling within the birds the following spring, they were released back into the wild. Although that practice still exists, over the past thirty years it has become less common.

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HUNTING with raptors has been practiced throughout the world for millennia, but in the United States the sport, for all intents and purposes, had its beginnings in the 1930s. Early American settlers had no time to train birds to fly after game, particularly when birds were far less effective than guns, traps, nets, and even dogs when it came to putting meat on the table.

Another impediment to falconry in America was the settlers' perceptions of the birds themselves. Falcons, hawks, and eagles, like bears, wolves, and foxes, were predators competing with settlers for prey, and they raided domestic stockyards and chicken coops. As such, they were to be killed on sight. Change in this attitude was a long time coming. Well into this century states paid bounties on raptors. As late as the 1960s it was illegal in some states to keep certain raptors captive but perfectly acceptable to kill them, as long as you left the carcass in the field. As the recovered peregrine that Mutch took to Dillon illustrates, raptors are still sometimes shot.

When Americans began to practice falconry, they adopted ancient training practices and language. In strict falconry jargon "falcon" refers only to a female peregrine falcon. A male peregrine, typically a third smaller than the female, is a "tiercel." The female gyrfalcon is a "gyrfalcon," while the male goes by "gerkin." How a bird came into captivity further defines it. An "eyass" is a chick taken from a wild nest, or aerie, and raised in captivity. If the bird was taken just as it was beginning to stray from the nest but before it learned how to make extended flights, it is called a "brancher." Birds caught in the wild when they are older than that are "passagers," or "passage birds," because they are generally taken during their first migration. If such a bird has reached its adult plumage, it is a "haggard." Should its first molt occur in captivity, it is "intermewed." Purists would claim that only someone who flies true falcons—peregrines, gyrfalcons, and other raptors of the genus *falco*—is worthy of the name "falconer," and that those who fly hawks, eagles, and owls should be called "austringers," although this bit of snobbery has fallen out of fashion among mainstream American falconers.

Louis Agassiz Fuertes kindled an interest in falconry with his 1920 *National*

Geographic article "Falconry, The Sport of Kings," and Colonel A. E. "Luff" Meredith, a career military aviator, is generally credited with bringing falconry to America. But it was the Craighead twins, Frank Jr. and John (now well known for their grizzly-bear research), who, beginning in the mid-1930s, did the most to spread popular interest in falconry. While still in high school the Craigheads met Meredith in Washington, D.C., where he talked to them about training wild raptors. At the time, the brothers had been shooting birds to satisfy an interest in taxidermy, but falconry captured their fancy. The Craigheads began working with Cooper's hawks and quickly moved to peregrines, prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks—even owls and ospreys. In 1937, while attending Pennsylvania State University (where they flew their falcons on the university golf course), the brothers co-authored an article in *National Geographic* about falconry.

Five years later they published another piece in the magazine. Those two articles created a foundation for American interest in the sport. But the shaping of modern American falconry would take another thirty years, and its fortunes were intimately bound up with those of the peregrine falcon, which the pesticide DDT nearly brought to extinction.

PEREGRINE falcons began rapidly disappearing from this country in the 1950s, and DDT was not initially implicated. Indeed, falconers were blamed at least in part for the dwindling of the peregrine population. Prior to 1970 no effective captive-breeding programs existed, and most falcons used in falconry were taken from the wild. It was assumed that a vast black market existed for illegally trapped birds.

Certainly there are now and were then bad falconers. In 1984 Operation Falcon, a major U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sting, nabbed a number of falconers for various felony violations. Operation Falcon proved to be a wildly controversial episode in the annals of falconry: it engendered bad feelings between falconers and law-enforcement agencies which persist to this day. The operation was fraught with mismanagement, falconers claim. For example, they say, the Fish and Wildlife Service appeared to violate the spirit of the laws it was purportedly

trying to uphold by allowing agents to steal then-protected *anatum* peregrine eggs from a nest for use as bait. In court Operation Falcon lost de facto entrapment arguments, found almost all its felony charges reduced to misdemeanors, and failed to prove the existence of an organized black market.

The truth is that the falconers' take of wild birds was probably biologically inconsequential. From 1965 to 1970 it became evident to biologists that the real villain was DDT. As it happens, falconers turned out to be largely responsible for the remarkable recovery of the peregrine falcon. In 1970 Tom Cade, a falconer and at the time a professor of biology at Cornell University, started the Peregrine Fund, which orchestrated what has been one of the more successful reintroductions to date of an endangered species in this country. Where others—including the Fish and Wildlife Service—had failed, Cade succeeded, largely because the birds he used for breeding stock were young birds donated by fellow falconers and were comfortable with captivity. The older birds used by the Fish and Wildlife Service would not breed.

"A lot of the information that led to the conclusion that a continental decline had occurred came from falconers who had been in the field, watching nests and keeping records," Cade told me not long ago. "Falconers were also influential in captive-breeding and release techniques. Their biggest contribution to the Peregrine Fund was to donate birds—either lending or giving them—so that we could use them as breeding stock. About half of the birds we used came from falconers."

In addition to saving the wild peregrine, the Peregrine Fund's captive-breeding program ensured the availability of birds for falconers. Captive breeding—along with the advent of radio telemetry—has also influenced the sport in other ways.

Traditional training methods call for leaving birds hooded or in dark rooms for great lengths of time, to keep them calm. But the advent of captive-bred birds has led to new approaches. Chicks are often given the run of the house. This dispels their notion that every time they see a human being, they will be fed. It also deepens the bond between man and bird. Mutch's peregrine June, which he raised

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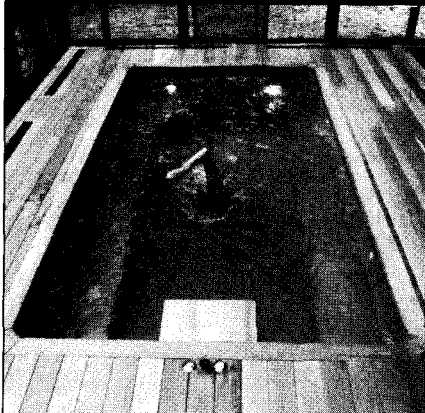
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from a chick, now believes that Mutch is her mate and will actively court him, sticking her beak in the dirt and raising her tail high while loudly sounding the kak-kak-kak of her mating call.

Radio telemetry has allowed falconers to keep their birds longer, further increasing opportunities for learning and decreasing pressure on wild populations by nearly eliminating the need for trapping new birds. Prior to telemetry, a falcon that pursued prey for miles before killing it—or giving up and roosting—would probably not be found again. But now a falconer can track his bird and lure it back to him. Telemetry has also changed the kinds of flights falconers will attempt with their birds, making possible the pursuit of challenging quarry like sage grouse and prairie chickens, which are likely to fly a long way off before a falcon can catch them.

The North American Falconers Association, founded in 1961, now claims 2,600 members (an additional 1,100 falconers are believed to operate independent of the organization). NAFA estimates that the number of participants has increased over the past decade by about 10 percent. "We're growing at a very slow pace, which is what we want," says the president of the organization, Ken Felix, a veterinarian from McKean, Pennsylvania.

Owing largely to NAFA, falconry is probably the most highly regulated wildlife-related sport in existence. "Falconry is hard to get into and it's kind of designed that way," Mutch says. "It's designed to discriminate against people who aren't totally committed to it. You get a lot of people who want a glamorous pet—who want to walk around with a falcon on their fist. Falcons are not pets."

Felix points to a traditional stronghold of falconry, Great Britain, to illustrate what NAFA does not want to see happen in this country. "The trouble in England right now is, to be a falconer you only have to plunk down fifteen pounds for a license. As a result, the sport is deteriorating. Incompetent people are doing it. I'm not elitist, but I think the situation we have in the U.S. is appropriate. We are keeping the sport generally away from casually interested people. We now have regulations. They're restrictive, but we want them restrictive. They're not hard-ship. Anybody who wants to put forth the effort can do it."

The effort is a serious undertaking. To become a master falconer in the United States a person must pass a hundred-question exam and then spend two years as an apprentice to a licensed sponsor and five years as a general falconer before applying for master falconer's status. Each state regulates the kinds and number of birds a falconer may fly at each stage of his progression, and may inspect mews and breeding facilities randomly. NAFA has been instrumental in developing legislation to protect birds of prey, and is actively involved in raptor restoration and rehabilitation programs. NAFA publications keep falconers up to date on developing techniques in the care and training of raptors.

NAFA's concern with standards indicates an awareness that all responsible falconers have about their sport: despite falconry's basis in natural acts, it is the hand of man from which the falcon flies. A falconer's error can bring this home with gritty reality. The day before Mutch's peregrine made its stoop at the ducks outside Dillon, a female gyrfalcon was killed while chasing sage grouse. The gyrfalcon had followed a grouse into cover and caught it in sagebrush. While she held the bird, trying to figure out how to extract and kill it, a golden eagle slammed the gyrfalcon from behind.

Jeff King, then a forty-year-old registered nurse and veterinary student, had trapped the immature gyrfalcon in the Palouse region of eastern Washington five months before. "A wild bird like this would probably not have allowed itself to be killed by another predator unless it had gotten pretty hungry," King said weeks later, still upset by the incident. He was coming to terms with the notion that he had miscalculated, had made the falcon hungry enough to ignore her natural caution, and had cost the bird her life.

Even captive-bred raptors revert almost completely to instinct in the act of hunting: nobody trains peregrines to break the neck of their prey immediately after bringing it to the ground, yet they all do. Falconers simply couldn't do much to improve a falcon's efficiency in killing; the human being's work is geared toward gaining acceptance from the bird and taking it into situations where it can act naturally. Each time he succeeds, a falconer edges closer to fully understanding those acts and what they mean. ☼



SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Zola Lives

A cause célèbre in France, Claude Berri's film of Germinal reveals the enduring—and especially Gallic—relevance of a great novel of injustice

ON October 19 of last year striking ground crews of Air France forced their way past the thin line of security men at the Paris airports of Orly and Roissy-De Gaulle and occupied the runways. The flagship of France's state sector was grounded.

Standing on a crate, a young mechanic clad in the traditional blue denim of the French working class said, "*Soyons raisonnable, camarades; demandons l'impossible*" ("Let us be reasonable, comrades; let's demand the impossible"). He may or may

not have been aware that the whimsical and outrageous slogan came from the "May events," the five weeks in the spring of 1968 that shook the Fifth Republic and earned a place of honor in the long, glorious tradition of social struggle

which is so much a part of French history. Last October "*l'impossible*"

was not preposterous. The ground crews basically were asking the company to go slow in its "restructuring" plan, which in practice meant layoffs. At a time when unemployment was rising by the tens of thousands every month and was the No. 1 issue throughout Western Europe, this did not seem like too much to ask. Yet from the state's point of view the strike was a

menace. The government installed in the spring had inherited a huge public deficit that contributed to the negative growth and high taxes that were keeping France in its worst recession in decades. Air France itself was set to lose more than a billion dollars for the year—a bill that the taxpayers would have to pay.

But like almost all bad French news, the strike was a source of pride to some part of the nation, for it fit into the tradition of rising up against injustice—social injustice, historical injustice, or foreign oppression. France was once again suffering exemplary hardships. Although the social struggles of 1993, since they weakened the economy, objectively did not enhance the government's position in the GATT negotiations over the new rules of world trade, they strengthened its political hand by creating a psychological mood of defiance. And into this mood Claude Berri's new film of Emile Zola's novel *Germinal* fit perfectly.

In Zola's mind, *Germinal* was nothing if not a cry for justice. Its appeal has been all but universal for a hundred years. Less readily apparent to American viewers, however, is the manner in which the movie *Germinal* metamorphosed into a cultural and political phenomenon unprecedented in recent French filmmaking, becoming a rallying cry for workers during the French recession, and also a standard raised against onerous American demands in international trade negotiations. And by way of this it became also a focal point in the debate over whether the national identity was threatened, at least symbolically, by the celluloid dinosaurs of *Jurassic Park* and the low cultural standards they represented.

Thus, unlike the films for which Berri is best known in the United States, *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring*, *Germinal* comes to these shores weighted down with baggage. This takes nothing away from its intrinsic value as art and entertainment, of course, but it surely adds to our understanding of how the French today see themselves—and us.

EMILE Zola, at the end of the nineteenth century considered to be France's greatest living novelist, was about midway through his twenty-vol-

Left to right: Renaud, Judith Henry, Miou-Miou, and Gérard Depardieu in a scene from the film Germinal

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ume Rougon-Macquart series when, in 1884, he decided to visit the Nord, the French *département* between Calais and Belgium, to gather material for a novel about miners, who he felt were at once the type of the new industrial proletariat and a unique "race" (as was said at the time) unto themselves. Inspired by Balzac's Human Comedy, the Rougon-Macquart series was "the natural and social history of a family in the time of the Second Empire," as Zola wrote. Zola had just come to the Anzin mines, as the guest of a local politician who admired his work, when a labor dispute broke out.

Because for novelistic purposes Zola had to set the action prior to 1870, when the empire collapsed under the impact of military defeat, there are a number of anachronisms in *Germinal*. But for the most part the story of the mine and the strike is told with a scrupulous concern for social and economic history. Anzin was typical of the great French mining enterprises, except that it was unusually big. Begun in 1757 under royal patronage, it was run as a state enterprise during the Revolution and returned to private hands by Napoleon, who was a firm believer in private property. An investment in Anzin grew by a fantastic factor of nearly a thousand during the nineteenth century. Names like Wendel and Casimir-Périer, among the foremost in French capitalism, were associated with the development of the mining industry.

The mining industry underwent a tremendous spurt midcentury as the use of coal became widespread. And although mining remained labor-intensive until after the First World War, with workers using picks and shovels rather than power tools, it was an early form of "restructuring" that brought on the Anzin strike. The strike lasted two months—an eternity for men who had to keep their families alive on pennies a week. The strike was broken, though not, as shown in *Germinal*, by the use of Belgian strike-breakers and shooting by French militia. (Zola was here alluding to earlier strikes in the same region.)

It took two decades for the union movement in the north of France to recover, but from then on it made substantial gains, through intense struggles. From 1900 to the Great War one out of five—in some years one out of two—striking workers in France was a miner.

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But in this period every tenth miner could expect to retire a cripple.

What Zola discovered when he visited the Nord was not only the conditions under which the miners worked, which he studied with his characteristic scrupulousness, touring mines and discussing extraction and safety questions with engineers, health problems with doctors, and, of course, life and work with miners. He also came in contact for the first time with the world of socialist and union agitation. *Germinal* is one of the first



The director Claude Berri

novels about the modern industrial proletariat and also probably the first novel to integrate into its plot many of the debates that have gripped the left for 150 years: "scientific" socialism versus "direct action" anarchism, reform versus revolution, trade unionism versus politics. It is no coincidence that *Germinal* was canonical in the European trade-union movements and in the socialist states after 1917 as well.

GERMINAL owes its power to the weaving of a dramatic and passionate tale into a realistic sociology of the mining town, with the big macroeconomic picture in the background. Zola's characters represent social classes, but they are not stereotypes.

Étienne Lantier, forced to seek work in the mine by necessity, chooses revolutionary action because he is outraged at the miners' condition, but he is impelled also by personal ambition. Maheu, a worker prized by the company for his skill and experience, is at forty-two already an old man with seven children, several of whom are by now "descending." His family takes Lantier in as a boarder. Maheu accepts the need for action only after being pushed to the breaking point by the company's inhumanity.

Both men are likable, even admirable in their courage, but they are not spotless heroes. Lantier sees a career opportunity—socialist politics—in union organizing. Maheu, good and honest as he is, occasionally behaves like the drunken lout that he also can be. The men are enhanced, not diminished, by this realism, just as the novel is deepened, not sentimentalized, by the accumulation of bitterness, sorrow, misery.

Zola is unsparing in describing what he himself referred to as hell. The unbearable heat of the mine, where men and women work half naked; the rough, brutish moments of leisure; the stunted children; the gnawing hunger; and, of course, the constant danger of the mine, with its cave-ins, its gas explosions, its floods, are piled on without pity for anyone. The reader emerges from *Germinal* in need of a crutch, which is provided by the last, lyrical pages of the novel. The Maheu family has been destroyed by the mine and the revolt against injustice, and now, as Lantier leaves to pursue his political agitation elsewhere, the sun comes out and he has a vision of the great social battles of the next century.

Although Zola took for his motto as a writer and a man "*Vivre indigné*" ("Live angry"), he was no revolutionary. His famous stand in the Dreyfus Affair, one of the great defining moments of the left-right divide in modern politics, was taken prudently, three years into the case. Once engaged, he gave it his all, as usual. "*J'Accuse*" remains one of the most powerful examples ever of polemical literature. Like all French writers—like all cultured Frenchmen—Zola believed implicitly that if a book was any good, it would have consequences. One did not produce literary works, or cultural products generally, or even polemical writing, for the fun of it. The French may have helped to invent the "art for art's sake" movement, but far more characteristic of their attitude are writers like Hugo and Zola. Miners came to Zola's funeral, in 1902, and tossed red flowers on his grave while chanting, "*Germinal!*" They were acknowledging what he had done for them. He had changed their lives and the perception people had of them.

The success of *Germinal* over the years—it is probably the most widely read book in France, with annual sales of 180,000—is itself a phenomenon of



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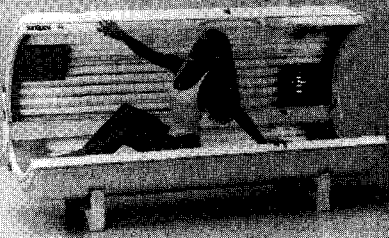
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French culture. It is explicable not only by the importance of the *lutte sociale*, the "class struggle," in the French imagination but also by the fact that *Germinal* is an awfully good novel.

CLAUDE Berri has had some experience with bringing awfully good novels to the screen. Though his early films were subjective and autobiographical, several years ago he took on the challenge of adapting the work of one of France's most beloved writers, who had also worked in the French film industry. This was Marcel Pagnol's story of greed and obsession, the two-volume *L'eau des collines*, which became the much-acclaimed *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring*.

Berri has said of *Germinal*, "I am sorry that it is so relevant, that it has become a political symbol." He was speaking of two controversies that swirled around the film after its release last September. One involved the tortuous end game of the GATT negotiations. As the reader will recall, France refused to sign the tariff-lowering agreement unless it excluded farm products and also cultural products—specifically French films, which have been subsidized in part by taxes levied on American films shown in France. Much to the displeasure of Jack Valenti, the president of the Motion Picture Association of America, the Clinton Administration agreed to exclude films from the agreement, which meant that the subsidy would continue. The release of *Germinal* contributed to the French insistence on the "cultural exception" from GATT. For not only did Berri publicly acknowledge his gratitude for the subsidy, saying, "*Germinal* could never have been made without our regulations and the subsidies that we receive from the film fund," but his film quickly became a symbol of the French art cinema that would be endangered by an influx of American pop-culture extravaganzas. At the Deauville film festival the French Minister of Culture, Jacques Toubon, deliberately singled out *Jurassic Park*, which also opened in the fall in France, as a "threat to France's cultural integrity"—to which *Germinal*, novel and film alike, was a monument.

The second controversy in which the film became enmeshed was the strike of Air France ground crews. The defiant

mood of the strikers matched that of the film, and in an interview Berri made the connection between life and art explicit by saying that "despite all the progress of our century, there is still injustice and exploitation against which people must fight." He was, he said, pleased if his film—which was advertised with posters depicting angry miners preparing for a fight—had inspired the airline strikers in their struggle for economic justice. He added that his own father, a furrier, voted Communist. And didn't Gérard Depardieu, who plays Maheu, have a father who was a laborer, and the French protest singer Renaud, who plays Lantier, a miner for a grandfather? "In another life," Renaud was quoted as saying, "I would have been Étienne Lantier."

This sort of genealogical solidarity may sound odd to American ears. In France, however, where half the people can say, and say earnestly, that they have peasant roots, it is real—whatever the degree of sentimentality involved—and it explains the extraordinary social-political role the film took on in France.

Germinal, which recently opened in the United States, received warm, if not enthusiastic, reviews in France. *Le Monde*, France's paper of record, praised the cast, which is led by Depardieu and Renaud. Actually, the most powerful performance is that of a young actor named Jean-Roger Milo in the role of Chaval, who in Zola's novel represents the brutalization of the miners in its most extreme form. The women are led by Miu-Miu as Maheu's wife and Judith Henry as his fifteen-year-old daughter Catherine, who is taken by Chaval and later falls in love with Lantier. The critics praised Berri for using extras he found on location in the Nord's mining towns, which are blighted by extensive unemployment.

The hip-left daily *Liberation* criticized the film as a "gigantic folklore museum of working-class culture," and people made snide remarks about how President François Mitterrand had taken scores of friends, carefully chosen from what the French call the "*gauche-caviar*" (comparable to "limousine liberals"), to Lille (in the Nord) for the premiere, where they feasted on lobster and champagne after the show. The extras, in an irony from which Zola would have taken bitter pleasure, were back on the unemployment lines. ☛

Talent on Loan From the GOP

Why Rush got boring after June 3, 1992

by James Fallows

**THE WAY THINGS
OUGHT TO BE**

by Rush Limbaugh.
Pocket Books,
315 pages, \$6.99.

**SEE, I TOLD
YOU SO**

by Rush Limbaugh.
Pocket Books, 353 pages,
\$24.00.

**THE RUSH
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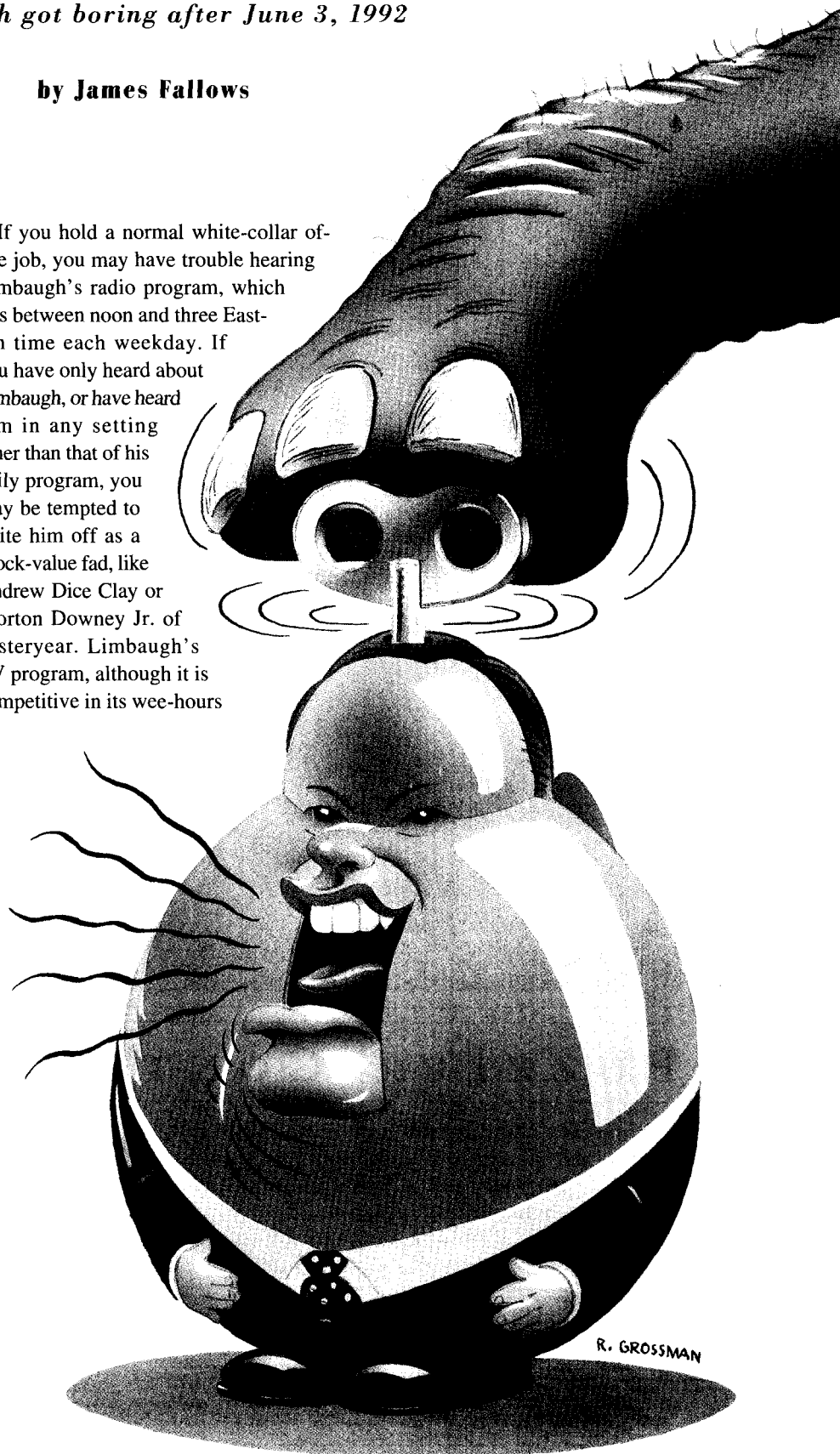
**Talent on Loan
From God**

by Paul D. Colford.
St. Martin's Press,
230 pages,
\$19.95.

IS there anything left to say about Rush Limbaugh? After reading two books by him and one book about him, plus following his radio show for several years and sporadically corresponding with him through E-mail, I still wonder about two things. One is whether the "crossover" formula that brought Limbaugh such spectacular success has now hit a fundamental limit. The other is the connection between Limbaugh's checkered personal history and his current political views.

Crossover appeal, comparable to what a rap or country group enjoys when it gets a mainstream following, is the thing that has set Limbaugh apart from other right-wing figures. I fear that most members of the professional class, and perhaps many readers of this magazine, will never take Limbaugh seriously enough or understand his appeal, because they have no chance to see him at his best.

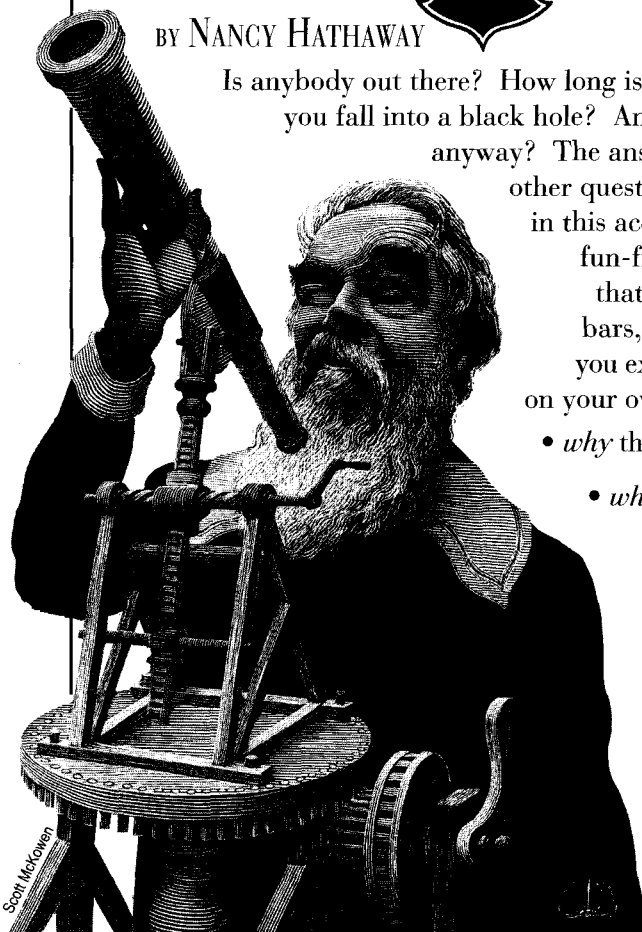
If you hold a normal white-collar office job, you may have trouble hearing Limbaugh's radio program, which airs between noon and three Eastern time each weekday. If you have only heard about Limbaugh, or have heard him in any setting other than that of his daily program, you may be tempted to write him off as a shock-value fad, like Andrew Dice Clay or Morton Downey Jr. of yesteryear. Limbaugh's TV program, although it is competitive in its wee-hours



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slot, screams "fringe operation" in a way his radio program never does. The set is cheesy; the audience looks homogeneous and so slavish toward Limbaugh that its raucous laughter and applause actually undercuts the host's appeal—he looks as if he were leading a cult rather than earning a following. Limbaugh is infinitely better to listen to than to look at; this is a man made for radio as David Letterman is for TV. Both of Limbaugh's books have been No. 1 national bestsellers—in his skillful biography of Limbaugh, Paul D. Colford estimates that Limbaugh earned \$5.5 million in book royalties and advances in 1992 alone. Yet neither book would explain Limbaugh's popularity to someone who had not heard the radio show. (The first book, *The Way Things Ought to Be*, is partly an autobiography and partly a digest of Limbaugh's political views, often taken straight from his radio broadcasts. The second, *See, I Told You So*, is a more straightforward, less interesting conservative tract.)

The element that has won for Limbaugh crossover listeners who would never sit still for Pat Buchanan or Jerry Falwell is his fusing of humor and Baby Boom-era pop culture with the conservative message. The power of this approach seems obvious now that Limbaugh has demonstrated it, but before him the only two people who had figured it out were Lee Atwater and P. J. O'Rourke. Conservatives like John Sununu and Dan Quayle would never choose "My City Was Gone," by the Pretenders, for theme music, because the lyrics of the song are explicitly anti-business: the city is "gone" in the song because of the ravages of capitalism. (Nor did Bill Clinton show much panache with his earnest and literal-minded campaign song, "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow.") Limbaugh laughed off the contradictions and appropriated the song. Hearing its powerful bass line, more people would think nowadays of Limbaugh than of the Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde.

Anyone who has really listened to the radio show knows that Limbaugh is genuinely smart and funny—as opposed to merely shocking, like Morton Downey, Andrew Dice Clay, or the right-wing talk-show host of the 1960s, Joe Pyne. Through the 1970s Limbaugh bounced around the country as a Boss Jock-style disc jockey, known during much of this period as Jeff Christie. Because of his

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Send your solved Puzzler "Garden Plot" (found on page 122) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, May Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by May 16. The winners' names will be published in the July issue. In addition, each of the winners will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Tough Cryptics*, a bimonthly cryptics publication.

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background he is more convincingly at ease with pop music than the Clintons or the Gores could ever be, and the best part of his show is his conversion of 1960s rock classics into parodies with a 1990s conservative message. The Beach Boys' "Little Old Lady From Pasadena" becomes an anti-Hillary tirade, "The Little First Lady With Megalomania." Dion's "The Wanderer" becomes "The Philanderer," sung by a beery Ted Kennedy sound-alike. These routines are mean-spirited, but they make me laugh, which is why I have often been among the daytime audience that, according to Limbaugh, now numbers 4.6 million at any given moment.

Liberals who are used to thinking of Limbaugh as another Falwell or Buchanan should instead think of his radio program, at its best, as another *Saturday Night Live*. What Chevy Chase did to the stumbling Gerald Ford and what Dana Carvey did to George Bush is what Limbaugh threatens to do, day in and day out, to the Clintons, Kennedy, Jesse Jackson, and anyone else on the left.

The *SNL* comparison underscores Limbaugh's commercial achievement even as it suggests his impending limitation. When *SNL* began, its cast was called the "Not Ready for Prime Time Players" precisely because its time slot seemed so dismal that the network had little to lose if the show failed. *SNL*'s success helped reverse that thinking and made the slot itself attractive. In an even more dramatic way, Limbaugh's program has changed the prevailing wisdom about how the radio business works.

BY far the most interesting part of the books Limbaugh has written is his account of the obstacles he encountered getting a nationally syndicated daytime talk show on the air. Syndicated radio programs have been commonplace at night. Long before he became a fixture on CNN, for instance, Larry King ran an all-night nationwide call-in show on the Mutual radio network. But local stations were willing to carry these shows mainly because the advertising potential for evening programs was paltry; most listeners were home then, watching television. Daytime and "drive time" programming was far more valuable, and in the pre-Limbaugh era radio managers thought that daytime programs had to be

(as Limbaugh puts it in his first book) "Local Local Local" in order to survive. Talk was fine, but it had to be about local politics, local celebrities, and local sports, and it had to provide a chance for local callers to get on the air. "We were planning to do what virtually everyone at any meaningful radio station in the country said was impossible: syndicate a controversial, issues-oriented program during the middle of the day," Limbaugh says in his first book. The real problem with the show was not that it was controversial or issues-oriented but that it came from out of town.

By the mid-1980s Limbaugh was running a call-in show on KFBK in Sacramento which prefigured his national show in both content and popularity. A radio veteran named Ed McLaughlin heard the show and persuaded Limbaugh to try to syndicate it. They realized that their plan could not succeed unless Limbaugh was based in either Los Angeles or New York and had outlets in both cities. They reached L.A. listeners through a tiny station in Simi Valley (which they later dropped when the giant L.A. station KFI picked them up), and squeezed into New York through a package deal with WABC. From 10:00 A.M. to noon Limbaugh did a purely local call-in show for WABC, and then from noon to 2:00 P.M. he used the same studio for his nationwide program, heard in fifty-six other cities but not in New York.

Paul Colford's biography of Limbaugh shows that Limbaugh's recollection of his rise is selective and self-serving on many points. For example, Colford points out that many of Limbaugh's distinctive pieces of stage business, from the "Dadalup! Dadalup!" introduction for news bits to his deliberate rattling of papers and other spoofs of on-air protocol, are derived from the disc jockey Larry Lujack, of Chicago's WLS, whom Limbaugh idolized as a boy. But Colford confirms Limbaugh's emphasis on the obstacles he faced, which make his success in changing the radio market all the more impressive. (Howard Stern is the best-known personality to have tried daytime syndication after Limbaugh showed that it was possible.)

Now, of course, Limbaugh is not a long shot but an industry. Colford estimates that in 1992 Limbaugh earned \$4 million directly from his radio program, plus an-



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other \$2.5 million from spinoff activities—including his “shockingly lucrative” newsletter, an eight-page monthly that goes to hundreds of thousands of subscribers at \$29.95 a year. Limbaugh could not have built such a following on ideology alone. Ronald Reagan won landslide victories, but no one would listen to him for fifteen hours a week. People listened to the Limbaugh program because it was great entertainment.

This brings us back to *Saturday Night Live*. It, too, has a political bias—how many of its cast and crew can have voted for Bush or Reagan?—but it is not always predictable. In its time it has ridiculed Jimmy Carter, Michael Dukakis, Ted Kennedy, Jesse Jackson, and other Democrats. Limbaugh, in contrast, has become 100 percent predictable. He has not, as far as I know, said or written anything positive, ever, about Bill or Hillary Clinton. Nor in the past year and a half has he said anything remotely critical or disrespectful about Dan Quayle, Jack Kemp, Clarence Thomas, William Bennett, or other inherently satirizable conservative characters.

Limbaugh earned the crossover part of his following because of his image as a wild man who was not afraid to make fun of anything. (His most notorious and memorable step in this direction was “caller abortions”: ending unwanted phone calls with the sound of a vacuum cleaner and a tiny scream. How could liberals say this was in poor taste? Limbaugh asked straight-faced. Weren't they the ones who said that abortions were okay?) But he is now manifestly afraid to make fun of the Republican Party or its platform. The result is as if *SNL* and David Letterman were afraid to make fun of Bill Clinton: the jokes get old when they're all the same. For people who don't agree with Limbaugh, his show has always been outrageous. Now it's dull. Limbaugh can certainly survive with an audience consisting only of believers, as Buchanan and Falwell do. But since crossover fans were so important to his ascent, it is puzzling that he would risk letting them drift away.

The shift seems to be traceable to one particular day. As recently as June 2, 1992, Limbaugh was free-swinging even against some Republicans. During the Republican primaries early that year Limbaugh had been very hard on George

Bush for his fecklessness and his deviation from the conservative line. Pat Buchanan's truculent campaign seemed matched to Limbaugh's outlook—and Limbaugh supported it on the air. “Rush was a big help to us during the primary campaign,” Buchanan told me recently. “We used to travel around New Hampshire in the car, and Rush would come on the radio telling everybody that it would be a good thing to vote for Buchanan and shake Bush up.” When Ross Perot first entered the race, Limbaugh was sympathetic to him, too. Paul Colford quotes Limbaugh's comments about Perot on June 1, 1992: “I think Perot convinces people that they matter again. . . . Say what you want about his lack of specificity, he's also the one candidate who doesn't run from a problem.” Limbaugh criticizes Perot in his first book, but in the second simply ridicules him as a “hand grenade with a crewcut” and a “ubiquitous irritant.” What happened?

On June 3 George Bush invited Rush Limbaugh to Washington. The two had dinner and took in a show together. Limbaugh stayed overnight in the Lincoln Bedroom—where, according to Colford, he placed calls to his relatives saying, “You'll never guess where I am!” and “remained awake into the wee hours so that he could study and savor every detail of the Lincoln Bedroom.” This kind of buttering-up may seem too obvious to be effective, as when Bill and Hillary Clinton started their “charm offensive” last summer by inviting White House reporters to dinner at the White House. But it generally works, and it worked miracles in Limbaugh's case.

From that day forward Limbaugh never said one word on his show that could be construed as hurting Bush's re-election effort (or at least none that I heard, and I was listening a lot at the time). Having proclaimed for years, and with good reason, that his show was so entertaining that it didn't need guests, he had both Bush and Quayle on the air and listened to them reverently. The significance of the change is not that Limbaugh backed Bush for re-election—millions of people did—but that one visit seemed to turn him around permanently. At the risk of pop-psychoanalyzing, something Limbaugh does every day on his show, let me suggest that his pliability is rooted in a strange insecurity.

THE life story hinted at in Limbaugh's books and spelled out in Colford's is a familiar one for people who end up as either comedians or disc jockeys. Limbaugh's father, Rush Limbaugh Jr., was a prominent small-town lawyer who looked down on his son's infatuation with radio. Indeed, Limbaugh says that his father never took his career seriously until he saw Rush Limbaugh III on *Nightline*. The years of youthful wallowing in pop culture that make a good comedian or DJ often mean a troubled school career. The on-air bravado and effusiveness of Limbaugh and other born DJs is very often accompanied by shyness and uncertainty in normal life. The DJs who sound so suave and confident were usually not seen that way when they were growing up. Even the most successful disc jockeys have usually had to move from city to city every few years. Limbaugh's early life sounds as if it fit this pattern. Moreover, he was by objective standards a failure well into his thirties. He was fired from several DJ jobs, had two short and unsuccessful marriages, was chronically broke, and spent five long years as a public-relations man for the Kansas City Royals, fearing that his radio career was over.

Limbaugh tells a version of this story on the air and in his books to make a point about the need to hold on to your dream. That's a good point, but his bumpy life story seems to have left Limbaugh inwardly vulnerable to the respectable world he mocks on-air. I remember being amazed two years ago when Limbaugh on his show described his excitement about having lunch with Peter Jennings. Limbaugh by then had more impact on U.S. politics than any anchorman, yet despite his "talent on loan from God" bombast he was clearly grateful for attention from someone he considered famous. The same tone came through in a profile of Limbaugh by Maureen Dowd in *The New York Times*. Limbaugh could mock liberals and "feminazis" on the air, but in person he was (Dowd made clear) very eager to be liked.

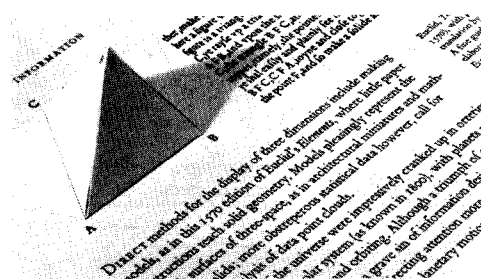
George Bush, or someone near him, clearly figured out the political benefits of being nice to Limbaugh. There was an intellectual counterpart to this wooing process. As Limbaugh became more and more a party operative, his subject matter shifted too—from positions he'd devel-

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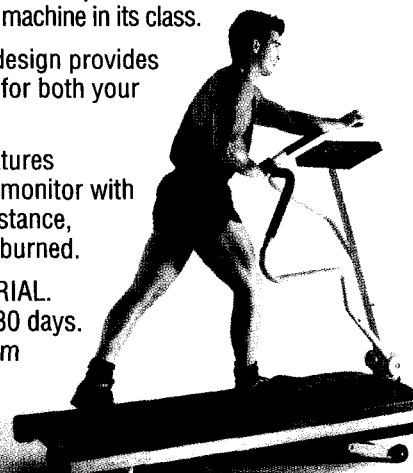
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oped to those he had obviously been fed.

While he was on his way up, Limbaugh's material was mainly cultural. Abortion, homelessness, environmental excess, feminism—you could hate what he said, but his positions were based on what he'd seen. He was sick of what he saw as liberal piety and was trying to poke holes in it and be funny at the same time. His opinions were political in the broadest sense but were not confined to straight party politics.

Then Limbaugh wrote his first book, based (to judge from his acknowledgments) on a draft by John Fund, of *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial page. Since then Limbaugh's emphasis has increasingly shifted to the *Journal's* own editorial-page causes, especially the doctrinaire version of supply-side economics. I disagree with the theory on its merits—but its merits are not its drawback for a radio show. There are two drawbacks: supply-side is more boring than Limbaugh's previous subjects, and it increasingly makes Limbaugh into the very thing he used to mock—a theorist out of touch with the realities of the world.

Whenever Limbaugh talks about economics in either book he comes out with statements that invite a "Hey, wait a minute!" response. Limbaugh says that liberal politicians gorge at the public trough and don't know what it means to earn an honest living. He then praises hardworking Republicans like Clarence Thomas and William Bennett, each of whom, of course, has spent most of his career on the public payroll. He inveighs against big-spending Democrats and deficit spending, but barely mentions the largest budget item of all, Social Security. Last year Limbaugh claimed on the air that as President, Bush faced a level of federal debt comparable to that which John Kennedy had faced—in each case the national debt totaled about 55 percent of the annual economic output. President Kennedy was praised for cutting taxes; therefore President Bush should have been too. He didn't say that 55 percent under President Kennedy was part of a steep downward trend in the debt level. (Total debt reached an all-time peak of about 127 percent of annual economic output just after the Second World War, and fell more or less continuously to 37 percent in 1982.) Bush's 55 percent was part of a dramatic rise. To say, as Lim-

baugh did, that Bush and Kennedy faced the "same" budget constraints is therefore (as I told Rush in one of my E-mail memos to him) like saying that an airplane a hundred feet off the ground during takeoff and one a hundred feet from impact during free fall are in the same shape. He is clearly working from clips and theories someone else has handed him, very much like the Hollywood liberals he ridicules, who are working from clips about the plight of whales or the rain forest.

The Republican Party and the supply-siders are now reaping the rewards of being nice to Limbaugh when liberals were mocking him. It never pays to be snide. Who knows how different politics would be today if liberals had been nice to Limbaugh first? ☛

Who Really Started the Korean War?

by John Lewis Gaddis

**UNCERTAIN PARTNERS:
STALIN, MAO,
AND THE KOREAN WAR**

by Sergei N. Goncharov,
John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai.
Stanford, 406 pages,
\$45.00.

WHEN the first spacecraft to orbit the moon transmitted their grainy photographs of its hidden side back to Earth, they produced simultaneous impressions of familiarity and strangeness. The shape was round and the topography cratered, as expected. But the far side was nonetheless so different in appearance from the one we have always known that images of the two hemispheres, viewed together, would not have seemed to be parts of the same satellite. In astronomy, as in history, a lot depends upon one's point of view.

Until recently historians of the Cold War had to view their subject in much the same way that astronomers for centuries saw only one side of the moon. The Unit-

ed States and its major allies opened most of their archives on the early history of that conflict years ago, making it possible for scholars to scrutinize their conduct in great detail. Records from the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe remained closed even to historians from those countries, though, with the result that the other side of Cold War history was about as obscure as the far side of the moon.

The end of the Cold War has dramatically changed that situation, along with so much else. The new regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe and the old one that still hangs on in China are now opening their archives to their own historians and to Western ones as well. Retired government, military, and Party leaders are busily publishing their memoirs and making themselves available for interviews. One of the few top Marxists who has yet to retire, Fidel Castro, has even found time to attend a conference on the Cuban missile crisis with old adversaries like Robert McNamara and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., inflicting upon them at characteristic length his own account of what happened. (Revenge can be sweet, even if innocuous and long delayed.)

But the most senior Cold Warrior of them all is still stubbornly silent: Kim Il-sung, whose durability is such that he has been running North Korea since that country was founded, has yet to volunteer for an oral-history interview at the Harry S. Truman Library. It is all the more intriguing, therefore, that one of the first books to draw upon the new sources for Cold War history focuses squarely on the war Kim started in June of 1950.

In a remarkable tripartite collaboration Sergei Goncharov, of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, of Stanford University, have produced a new and highly revealing account of how the Korean War began, based on a careful comparison of Chinese, Soviet, and even North Korean sources. Their achievement, from a historian's perspective, is roughly the equivalent of making a first flight around the hidden side of the moon.

WHO really started the Korean War? The question seems easy enough to answer, because it is generally acknowledged that at 4:00 A.M. on June 25, 1950, North Korean troops crossed the

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How the Boycott works.

The boycott works on several levels. The primary boycott

prohibits Arab people and Arab states to do any business—with and in Israel. The secondary boycott attempts to prevent businesses anywhere in the world from any economic activity with Israel and threatening them with economic retaliation if they do not conform. It is a very potent weapon, since most countries and most businesses are well aware that the large Arab market and its enormous oil wealth make it most unattractive to get into the bad graces of the Arabs. Little consideration is given to the fact that the boycott is a gross violation of international law. The U.S. is the one shining exception to the almost universal acceptance of this economic blackmail. There is also the tertiary boycott that punishes firms that deal with blacklisted businesses. And perhaps the most damaging aspect is the so-called "voluntary boycott", by which companies, and in some cases entire countries, refrain pre-emptively from doing business with Israel in order to avoid retaliation by the Arabs.

The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against the state of Israel. It is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel."

The Arab Boycott Office maintains a blacklist, which at last count included over 6,300 entries in 96 countries. In the United States alone, over 12,000 firms each year receive requests from Arab firms for boycott compliance. In Europe and Asia, where, in contrast to the United States, boycott compliance is usually legal, the numbers are probably much higher.

The primary damage of the boycott to the Israeli economy is that it prevents or considerably hampers investments in the country. That loss is estimated to be on the order of \$500 to \$600 million per year. The loss of potential trade with the Arab countries alone is on the order of over \$500 million per year. Because of the boycott, Israel's commercial exports are at least 10% less than they would otherwise be—a loss of about \$1.2 billion per year!

The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against Israel. The boycott is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel, since the boycott started over twenty years before any such territories came under Israeli administration. Its purpose is the strangulation of Israel—to achieve by economic means what the Arabs, despite many tries, have been unable to achieve by military means. But the greatest losers of the boycott may well be the Arabs themselves. Blinded by their hatred of Israel they have prevented the Middle East from becoming an area of growth and prosperity exceeding even the Asian Pacific Rim countries. Rescinding the almost 50-year old boycott would be an encouraging signal to the world and to the Israeli public. Their not bringing even such a gesture does give a clue that the intentions of the Arabs are not peaceful and that Israel is justified in proceeding with greatest caution in any peace negotiations.

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38th parallel en masse, beginning an invasion that would take them, within weeks, to the tip of the Korean peninsula. In fact, though, historians have had greater difficulty explaining the origins of the Korean War than of any other major Cold War event, for several reasons.

First, the conflict in Korea was internal before it became international. No generally accepted government was ready to take over when the Japanese relinquished control of their former colony at the end of the Second World War; as a consequence, there would very likely have been some form of civil war in Korea even if there had been no Cold War.

Second, the North Koreans themselves, together with the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists, claimed from the first that South Korea had attacked them. There was never hard evidence for this, but the undisguised and frequently expressed determination of the South Korean President, Syngman Rhee, to "liberate" his countrymen on the other side of the 38th parallel gave the claim at least a superficial plausibility.

Third, if the North Koreans did start the war, why did their superpower ally, the Soviet Union, without whose military assistance they could hardly have acted, fail to have its representative present in the United Nations Security Council to veto the UN's participation in the defense of South Korea? Why, for that matter, would the normally cautious Stalin have authorized so risky a provocation in the first place?

Fourth, the Korean War seemed almost too convenient for the United States. It came just as Truman Administration officials had completed NSC-68, a top-secret document whose authors envisioned tripling the defense budget in response to the victory of communism in China and the Soviet development of an atomic bomb. How such a recommendation could be sold to the public, Congress, or even President Truman himself was not at all clear—until the Korean War broke out. The journalist I. F. Stone was quick to suggest—several historians since have followed his lead—that the Americans and the South Koreans somehow provoked the Korean conflict to justify the costlier Cold War that officials in Washington were now determined to wage.

Finally, the availability of archives on

only one side of the Korean War made it impossible to do much more than speculate about what the other side might have done to initiate the conflict. Adapting Willie Sutton's principle about banks and money, historians chose to work where the documents were, not where they weren't. The result was a literature that labored mightily either to implicate or to exonerate the United States and its allies while neglecting what happened in Moscow, Beijing, and Pyongyang.

USING newly released Soviet, Chinese, and North Korean sources, Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue solve most of these puzzles by establishing conclusively that the idea of attacking South Korea came from Kim Il-sung, who repeatedly urged this course of action, and that in the spring of 1950 Stalin and Mao Zedong—with some misgivings—gave him the necessary authorization to go ahead.

Stalin's reasons for doing this, the authors suggest, included his shifting assessment of the prospects for international revolution, which because of the Marshall Plan and NATO now looked more favorable in Asia than in Europe. The Soviet leader had been much heartened—if surprised—by the sudden victory of communism in China. Adjusting quickly, he pressed his new Chinese allies to take the lead in supporting revolutionary movements elsewhere in that part of the world: significantly, he invited Ho Chi Minh to visit Moscow secretly in February, 1950, while Mao himself was there. "Let's add to China's population of 475 million, the populations of India, Burma, Indonesia, [and] the Philippines," Stalin told the Chinese. "If the people of these countries listen to you, the Japanese probably also will. . . . There is no other Party in the world that has such far-reaching prospects."

The question remains, though, why Korea? Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue show that despite Stalin's euphoria he did worry—his own agents in China encouraged him to do so—about Mao's long-term reliability. A unified Korea under Kim Il-sung would provide a kind of insurance against Chinese disloyalty, especially if the new Communist regime should force the Russians to give up the Manchurian port facilities and railroad rights they had obtained from Chiang Kai-shek in 1945. Given the extent to which the Americans were forti-

fying Japan and Okinawa in 1950, this would have been, from Moscow's perspective, no insignificant matter.

Then there was Stalin's opportunism—his tendency to advance in situations where he thought he could do so without provoking too strong a response. The Americans had made no secret of their relative lack of interest in Korea. Not only had they withdrawn their occupation troops in 1949, but Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a well-intentioned but carelessly worded speech in January of 1950, had publicly excluded both South Korea and Taiwan from a list of positions the United States would directly defend against attack. Acheson had not meant to write off either territory: they would be able to look for their protection, he observed, to the United Nations, which so far had not proved to be a "frail reed" to lean upon. Stalin, it appears, did not grasp this rather elegant circumlocution.

Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue confirm that Kim Il-sung met with Stalin in Moscow in April of 1950, assuring him that the North Koreans could overrun South Korea in only three days. Communist sympathizers there would rise up in arms to welcome the liberators, he promised, leaving the United States no time to intervene even in the unlikely event that it should choose to do so. Still not wholly persuaded, Stalin made his approval contingent on Kim's ability to secure Chinese support: "If you should get kicked in the teeth, I shall not lift a finger. You have to ask Mao for all the help."

The North Korean leader then dutifully visited Beijing, where he found Mao initially skeptical, warning also of the possibility of American intervention. But in the end the Chinese went along, apparently for two reasons. One was that Mao himself was planning an invasion of Taiwan, and had requested Soviet military assistance in that enterprise. Stalin had ruled this out for fear of provoking the Americans, but during Mao's visit to Moscow—and perhaps in response to Acheson's statement about not defending Taiwan—he had changed his mind and encouraged the Chinese to go ahead. For Mao to have expressed reservations about Kim's plans for South Korea might have revived Stalin's nervousness about supporting the projected Chinese attack on Taiwan.

The other reason Mao approved the North Korean invasion, the authors sug-

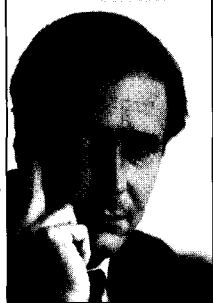
gest, was that Kim exaggerated Stalin's optimism about its prospects, thereby manipulating both leaders into endorsing what he wanted to do. "It was," Gorcharov, Lewis, and Xue conclude, "reckless war-making of the worst kind. Each of three Communist leaders was operating on premises that were largely concealed and facts that were fabricated or at best half true."

Even before Mao had given his consent, Stalin had authorized a swift build-up of Soviet military supplies in North Korea, with his own generals handling detailed war planning. Operational orders, approved by the Soviet leader himself, called for a "counterattack," thus maintaining the fiction that the South had attacked the North. "It was a fake," a North Korean general subsequently explained, "disinformation to cover ourselves." How much Mao knew of these plans remains in doubt: it appears that after Kim assured him Chinese help would not be required, he paid little attention to what was happening in Korea, even to the point of ordering a redeployment of several army corps to the Taiwan Strait only forty-eight hours before the North Korean attack took place. The invasion, when it came, therefore caught not only the South Koreans and the Americans but also Mao by surprise.

BUT then it was the turn of the Russians and the North Koreans to be astonished by the swift American decision to resist the attack. It was this wholly unexpected development that caused the Soviet Union's embarrassment at the United Nations: Stalin had placed such confidence in Kim's assurances that Washington would do nothing that he did not bother to send anyone to the Security Council prior to the invasion to veto a collective military response to it.

There remains the question of why the Chinese and not the Russians came to the North Koreans' assistance following the successful landing of UN forces at Inchon in September of 1950 and their subsequent crossing of the 38th parallel. Gorcharov, Lewis, and Xue show that although Mao had hoped to avoid such a development, his own military preparations for intervention in Korea had begun as early as July. What motivated him was partly the American decision, made at the time of the North Korean attack, to de-

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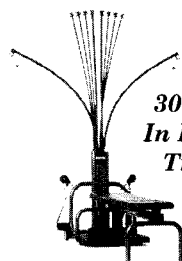
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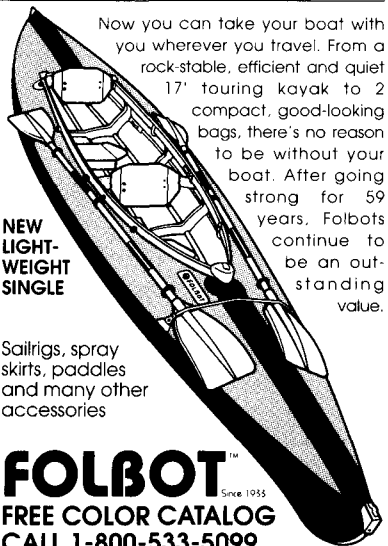
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ploy the Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait. But Mao also worried, it turns out, about falling dominoes: if the Americans and their allies conquered all of Korea, he warned Stalin, counter-revolutionary forces in China and the rest of Asia would take heart and reverse the process that had begun in that part of the world.

At this point Stalin waffled. The Soviet Union could not intervene directly, he told Zhou Enlai early in October, because although a world war with the United States would eventually come, Korea was not the place for it to start. He promised military equipment and air cover if the Chinese entered the war, only to withdraw the offer after they had decided to do so. Mao went ahead anyway with his decision, as he revealingly put it, to "order the Chinese People's Volunteers to... join the Korean comrades in fighting the aggressors and winning a glorious victory." Moved to the verge of tears by this demonstration of revolutionary fervor, Stalin reversed himself again, authorizing Soviet military assistance and limited air cover. "The Chinese comrades are so good," the old dictator was heard to mutter. "The Chinese comrades are so good." Mao, it appears, drew his own conclusions about the reliability of Soviet promises.

WHAT, then, do we learn from this glimpse of the other side? For one thing, we now know who really started the Korean War, and it was not the United States or South Korea. Continuing efforts by a few historians to update I. F. Stone's argument using an Oliver Stone methodology will not wear well when set beside the careful scholarship of Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue. There was indeed a conspiracy—a "hidden history" of the Korean War—but it took place in Pyongyang, Moscow, and Beijing.

At the same time, it is also clear that the North Korean attack was not, as it seemed to many in the West, the first step in a coordinated Communist offensive controlled from the Kremlin. The perception that the forces of history now favored revolutions in Asia appears to have increased Stalin's willingness to run risks in that part of the world, but only as long as they did not involve the Soviet Union directly. Mao took his Marxism more seriously than many historians have realized, which led him to give Moscow the benefit of the doubt while consistently

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denying it to Washington. But Stalin's willingness to see the Chinese embroiled in the Korean conflict—at the expense of their ambitions with respect to Taiwan—did raise doubts in Mao's mind; certainly he would be much less deferential to Stalin's successors.

One of the most striking features of this book is the precision with which it delineates personalities hitherto visible only from a distance. We see Stalin carried away by euphoria over the revolution in China, even as he regarded Mao with wary unease: Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue describe each leader as "searching out hidden meaning and potential traps in even the most innocent remarks of the other," while their "bewildered and alarmed" interpreters and advisers exchanged nervous glances. We get examples of Mao's fondness for untranslatable metaphors followed by cryptic silences: "We have come here . . . to complete a certain task," he told his perplexed Soviet hosts at the first Kremlin banquet he attended, "and it must be both beautiful and tasty." We catch the Chinese leader in the prosaic task—which must enlist any author's sympathy—of instructing subordinates back in Beijing to proofread the official account of the Sino-Soviet treaty before publishing it: "Pay attention. This is extremely important, extremely important!" And we cannot help marveling at the cynical skill with which the wily Kim Il-sung persuaded both dictators to "trust me"—trustfulness not having previously been a quality associated with either of them—in a way that produced disastrous results. It is a record that anyone concerned about Kim's current preoccupations, which appear to lie more in the realm of nuclear capability than of oral history, would do well to keep in mind.

With all the foreign-policy disasters that took place on the Western side during the Cold War, none was comparable, in its long-term results, to the one Stalin, Mao, and Kim inflicted upon themselves and their countries through their inept and ill-considered actions. The decision to attack South Korea not only produced a brutal and protracted war with hundreds of thousands of casualties—by far the majority of them Korean and Chinese. It also brought about the implementation, with a vengeance, of NSC-68, which vastly increased U.S. military capabili-

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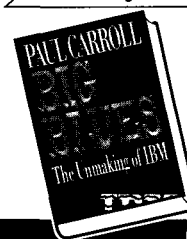
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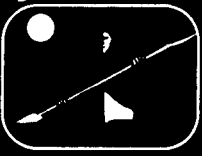
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ties. It provoked the decision to station American troops permanently in Europe, the rearmament of West Germany, and that country's eventual entry into NATO. It sparked an economic boom in Japan that would in time leave the Soviet Union itself far behind. It began the unraveling of the Sino-Soviet alliance, preparing the way for the great schism that would ultimately shatter the unity of international communism. And it resulted in a lifetime of seedy isolation for the Great Leader in Pyongyang who started it all.

Uncertain Partners sets an exemplary standard for the "new" Cold War history.

Carefully documented, judiciously argued, and often eloquently written, it helps us to know ourselves better by providing that all-important basis for comparison with the other side which the "old" Cold War history so conspicuously lacked. It ought to leave us with an odd sense of reassurance about the fundamental strengths—despite all their faults—of democratic institutions. For in authoritarian systems like the ones this book describes, who is there to tell great leaders the truth when they are on the verge, as Stalin, Mao, and Kim were in June of 1950, of doing something extremely stupid? ☛

BRIEF REVIEWS



The Birthday Boys

by Beryl Bainbridge.

Carroll & Graf, 192 pages,
\$18.95.

Ms. Bainbridge, whose novels are usually set in solidly familiar British circumstances, has made a daring leap into remote terrain. Her latest novel is a first-person reconstruction of the characters and experiences of the men who died with Robert Scott in Antarctica. There are four of them: Edgar Evans, the large, efficient, hard-drinking Welsh petty officer; Edward Wilson, the soft-hearted doctor and amateur painter; Henry Bowers, game for anything; and Lawrence Oates, the cavalry officer who can never quite forgive Scott for his folly in the purchase of ponies. Finally there is Scott himself, understandably burdened by worries, touchy about his authority, and inclined to daydream about his wife. Each man describes a different portion of the expedition, and it is impressive that Ms. Bainbridge has achieved the effect of individual voices without sacrificing her own elegant style. Evans, who opens the novel, gives a polished account of the farewell celebrations but somehow remains his slambang self.

Scott reports events midway and unknowingly reveals his tendency to blame difficulties on anything but his own misjudgment. Oates, a sometimes supercilious observer because he sees his navy companions as an alien breed, winds up the deadly retreat from the Pole. The novel is a successful blending of historical fact and imaginative interpretation, a grim story told with sympathy and skill.

American Indian Lacrosse

by Thomas Vennum Jr.

Smithsonian, 376 pages, \$44.95
and \$15.95.

Mr. Vennum tells more about lacrosse play than anyone but a fan of the game is likely to wish to know, but he also provides information about the Indian rituals, beliefs, and maneuvers surrounding it which will interest anyone with a regard for Native American history. Indian lacrosse was called the "little brother of war," and was used, on occasion, for political chicanery and military deception. It was also the basis of much wagering, to the outrage of missionaries who took their usual curious approach to attracting con-

verts: if the heathen enjoy it, make them stop. Mr. Vennum's factual material is interspersed with fictionalized versions of certain events, an odd arrangement abandoned once the author gets to the shameful account of how whites, having learned a fine game from the Indians, conspired to drive their teachers off the field.

Now You See Her

by Whitney Otto.
Villard, 320 pages,
\$20.00.

Kiki, the heroine of Ms. Otto's novel, is a fact researcher who, as a whimsical extension of her work, asks her mother and two female friends for a list of what they most want. They all begin with love, which should warn the reader that there is a woman's-plight discussion in prospect. It is, however, a good one, in which such stock characters as the patiently invisible mistress, the lonely widow, the dutiful subordinate, and the wary bystander become believable people whose problems deserve attention even when self-created.

Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens

by John E. Mack, M.D.
Scribner's, 448 pages,
\$22.00.

Dr. Mack is a professor of psychiatry at the Cambridge Hospital, Harvard Medical School. For the past several years he has conducted interviews, reinforced by recollections induced through hypnosis, with people who believe that they have been abducted by nonhuman creatures, subjected to experiments (usually sexual), and advised that humanity is destroying the earth through greedy exploitation of the environment and had better stop doing that. Dr. Mack has been unable to detect any signs of mental derangement in his interviewees, and because their reports have so much in common, he has come—to his own surprise—to believe that what they say happened really did. This is hardly what one expects from the Harvard Medical School. The author provides little peripheral information about his abductees, but what there is reveals that most of them come from religious denominations with reputations—deserved or not—for sexual severity and emotional enthusiasm, and their ages range from twenty-two to fifty-five, which means that

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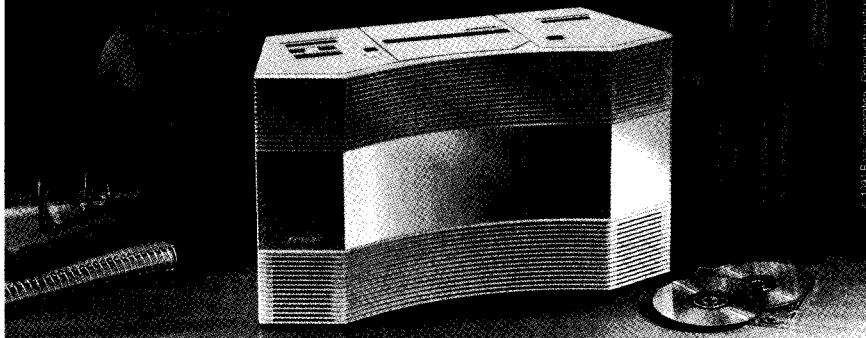
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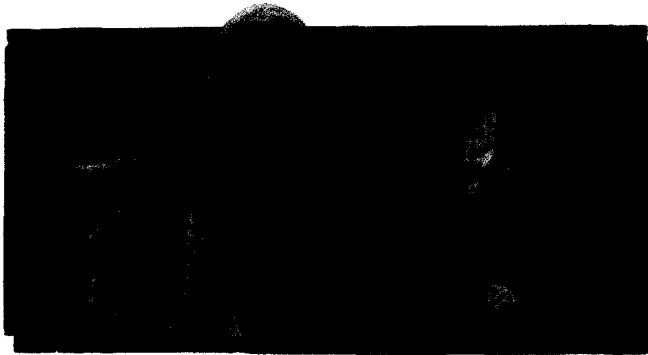
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WORD HISTORIES

by Craig M. Carver



dastardly

American labor unions late last year threatened to oppose at primary-election time those Demo-

crats guilty of "turncoat action" in supporting NAFTA. The labor leader Walter Johnson, in a letter to Representative Nancy Pelosi, of California, said, "We intend to

take this action against all Democrats who support this *dastardly* treaty." *Dastardly* (treacherously cowardly) originates in the Old Norse *dasa*, meaning "to become exhausted, especially from the cold." English adopted *dasa* and changed it to *dasen*, meaning "to be numb with cold," which survived in Scottish and Northern English dialect ("The callour air . . . *Dasing* the blude [blood] in every creature"—Bishop Gavin Douglas, *The XIII Bukes of Eneados*, 1513). To be exhausted and numb is to be stupefied; thus *dasen* led to *dase* or *daze*, meaning

"to stupefy, stun" ("I stod as styлле as *dased* quayle"—*Early English Alliterative Poems*, c. 1325), which in turn became *dased* or *dast*, "dull, inert, stupid." *Dast* was combined with the suffix *-ard* (one who is characterized by the preceding quality or action) to form *dastard*, meaning "a dazed person, a dullard" ("These dronken *dastardes*. . . drinke till they be blinde"—Alexander Barclay, *The Shyp of Folyes*, 1509). For reasons that remain murky, the pejorative meaning "a dullard" metamorphosed into "a base coward."

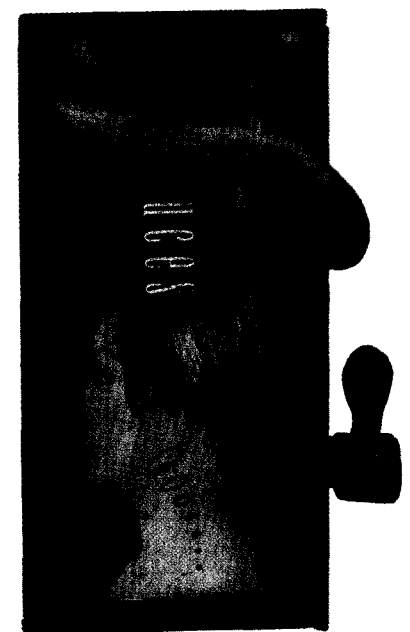
sack

During the National Football League playoffs last December, in a pregame interview, one of the Dallas Cowboys said about a defensive end on the opposing team, "He's pretty sound. He plays the run well, and he has all those *sacks*." Some football fans claim that the Washington Redskins coach George Allen coined this most recent meaning of *sack*, "a tackle of a quarterback behind the scrimmage line before he can

pass the ball," in the early 1970s, when he said, referring to the Cowboys quarterback Craig Morton, "We're going to take that Morton salt and pour him into a *sack*." Although *sack* (bag) is ultimately from the Hebrew *saq* (sack), the immediate source of Allen's quip may be the use of *sack* meaning "to put a person in a sack to be drowned" ("A foolish or imprudent act / Would . . . have . . . ended in his being . . . *sack'd* / And thrown into the sea"—George Gordon Byron, *Don Juan*, 1823). Alternatively, it may have descended from the sixteenth-century English borrowing of the French *sac*, meaning "to plunder a captured city," which probably derived from the custom according to which the soldiers of a victorious army would fill their sacks with booty ("The *toune* was *sacked* to the greate *gayne* of the Englishe-men"—Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, 1548). The idea of winning the riches of a defeated city or country would then have led to the more specialized meaning "to beat in a contest" ("He and a party of Englishmen fought a cricket match with the crew of the *Belle-rophon* . . . and *sacked* the sailors by 90 runs"—Edward FitzGerald, *Letters*, 1841).

faucet

During preparations last November for the historic mission to repair the Hubble Space Telescope, NASA scientists and astronauts worried about the many things that could go wrong. "We've got a good shot at success," said Dr. Edward J. Weiler, the Hubble program scientist, "but we've got to be realistic: this is not like going to Grandma's to fix a leaky *faucet*." One authority suggests that *faucet* originates in a diminutive of the Latin *fauces*, meaning "throat." Most authorities, however, agree that the Latin *fallere*, "to deceive," is the origin of *faucet*—and of *fail*, *false*, *fallacy*, *fallacious*, *fallible*, *fault*, *faulty*, and *faux pas*. *Falsus*, the perfect participle of *fallere*, led to the Medieval Latin *falsäre*, "to corrupt, falsify," which became the Old French *faulser* or *fausser*, "to falsify, damage, break into" (as in *faulser un escu*, "to pierce through a shield, to make a breach in it"). Because a stopper pierces the wall of a tapped cask, *fausser* became *fausset*, meaning "a plug or stopper for a cask," and was adopted into English ("Lo! my wombe is as must [wine] with out *faucet* ether a ventyng that brekith newe vessels"—John Wyclif,



trans., *The Holy Bible*, Job 32:19, c. 1430). The tap by which liquor was drawn from a cask was called the *spigot* and *faucet*, the *faucet* being the tapered end of a straight wooden tube that was driven into a hole in the barrel, and the *spigot* being the end that controlled the flow by means of a peg or screw. Eventually both words came to refer to the whole apparatus. But *faucet* essentially died out in England, although it has survived in common use in the United States.



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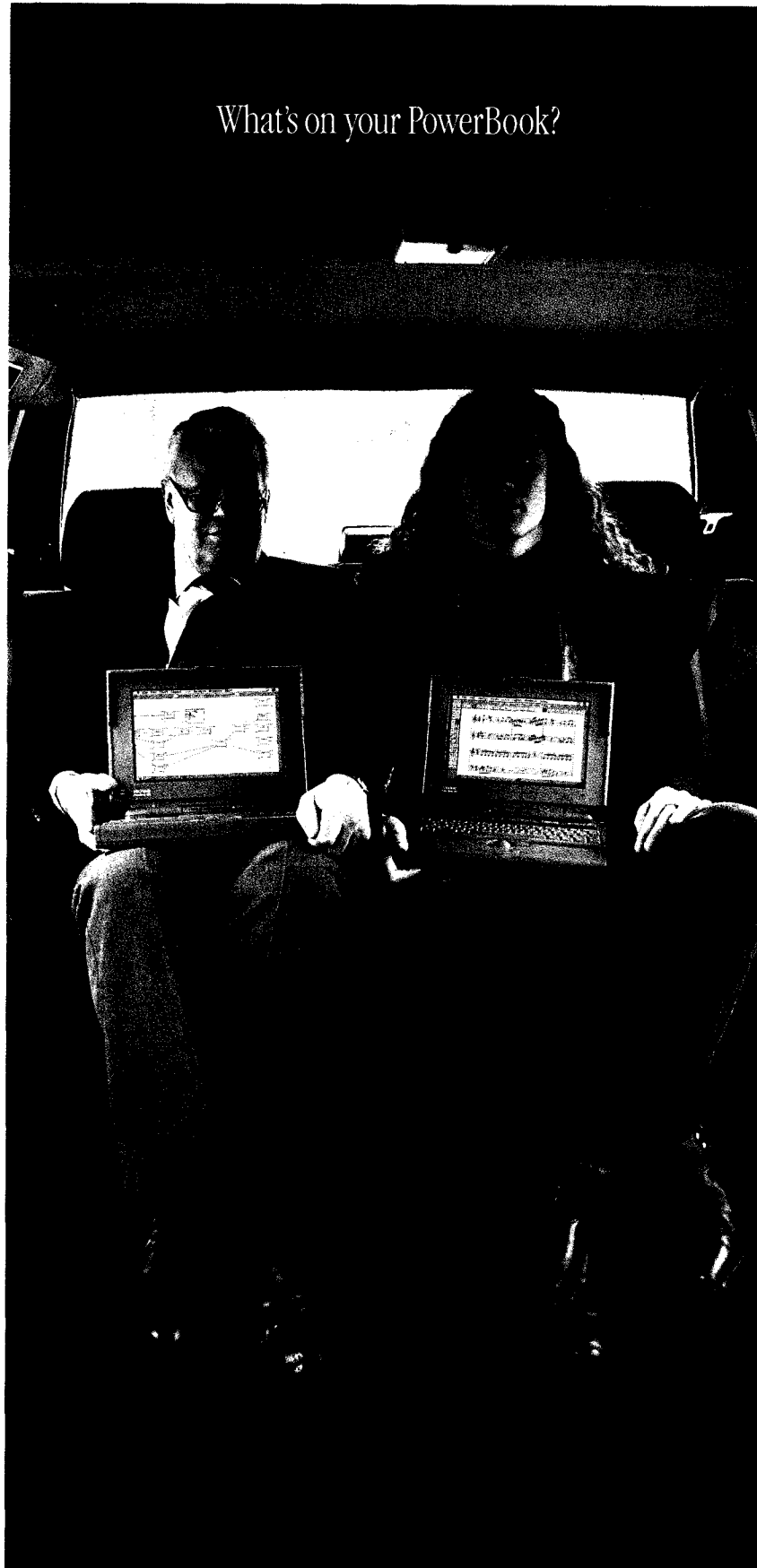
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